U.S. Counter-terrorism Policy:

A Case Study of ISIS

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Souravie Ghimiray

United States Studies Programme

Center for Canadian, United States & Latin American Studies

School of International Studies

Jawaharlal Nehru University

New Delhi 110067

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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis entitled "Counter-terrorism Policy: A Case Study of ISIS" submitted by me for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The thesis has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.

Souravie Ghimiray.

SOURAVIE GHIMIRAY

CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this thesis be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

ABDUL NAFEY

Chairperson, CCUSLAS

CHAIRPERSON
Centre for Canadian, US &
Latin American Studies
School of International Studies
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi - 110067

CHINTAMANI MAHAPATRA

Supervisor

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Preface

Terrorism took a center stage after 9/11 attacks and Al-Qaeda became the biggest terrorist phenomena that the world had ever known. After thirteen years of 9/11 incident, in 2014 religious terrorism abruptly manifested in the form of ISIS. Once again creating awe and shock by the establishment of the Islamic caliphate. Even more shocking is the barbarity and blood-spilling that this new face of international terrorism has been preaching on. It managed to capture landmass as big as that of U.K. while ruling its subjects with Islamic laws and cruelty.

The situation in the Middle East was in a turmoil due to the Syrian crisis and reached another level when ISIS proclaimed Islamic caliphate comprising territories from Iraq and Syria. U.S. had no other option but to stop such a crisis from escalating further. This time, it acted with the coalition of states in countering the threat from ISIS. Despite these developments, there is an urgent need to understand the importance of effective means to counter such a threat. The basic goal of this research is to understand ISIS and analyze the existing counterterrorism policy of U.S. by comparing its advantages and disadvantages to learn its effects on the group. Due to the novelty of the subject of ISIS in the field of terrorism, it is premature to arrive at the success and failures of U.S. counterterrorism policy hence, this research aims to discover the flaws of previous counterterrorism policy to avoid repetition of previous mistakes while dealing with ISIS.

This study carries the theme of U.S. counterterrorism policy with its relevance in the present context of ongoing instability in the Middle East region caused by the abrupt rise of ISIS. The research on ISIS is at infancy and the future projections for the groups' success or failure depends on the counter-terrorism strategy and policies pursued by the coalition of states led by the U.S. Due to the complexity of terrorist organization counterterrorism policy has to be reformulated and reviewed constantly depending on the situation in which it thrives. The death of Bin Laden gave a morale boost to the U.S., but there was a failure on the part the of intelligence to recognize the possibilities of the rise of another leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi who laid the foundation of a more brutal extremist terrorist organization before he was killed.

Terrorism studies not only pertain to scholarly interest but it has policy relevance too. The need to study terrorism can be explained by its importance in the society and in international Relations, its research affects in developing counterterrorism policies and strategies. So far it has helped in development, application and implementation of counterterrorism policies and strategies. Terrorism has evolved to be more powerful and resilient. The terrorist groups of Cold War period had a short life span but in today's world the lifespan of the terrorist group has increased much more and have become much more resilient. As seen from Al-Qaeda's experience it stood against one of the largest terrorist campaign conducted ever by U.S. and continues to build its global network. ISIS managed to take advantage of the upheaval followed by Arab Spring, it fomented the sectarian violence and exploited poorly administered places and infiltrated through the porous borders to sustain itself. Terrorism thrives in failing states and ISIS has an intention of pursuing it further. Global communications have acted as a boon to ISIS, it has successfully attracted thousands of recruit from the digital platform and radicalized thousands more through its online propaganda.

U.S. and international community have concerns about terrorism due to its destructive nature and modern terrorism has the characteristic of spilling the conflict into other parts of the world. Hence, counterterrorism strategies and policies should follow multilateralism and cooperation in dealing with the threat from terrorism.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Significance of the Study

Terrorism has evolved into political, religious, and criminal form since hundreds of years of its existence and continues to evolve. The terrorism of today is different in most of the aspects to the terrorism of previous decades in terms of its lethality of methods, weapons, objectives, and impact. Religious fundamentalism and extremism has existed since ages and has resorted to terror tactics to achieve a particular goal including taking vengeance, gain publicity, political bargaining, harm a government, remove a government, destroy social systems. But the major difference with today's religious terrorist groups is the nature of the goals pursued by them so ambitious which seems almost unachievable from a practical sense, like world domination as the ultimate objective of ISIS. Even more absurd is the nature of the goal when it is dictated by a prophetic message from God. In the debate surrounding the absurdity of today's terrorist motives is the reality in which it has been able to cause the destruction of highest magnitude that no other terrorist organization has been able to cause in retrospect.

The only weapon that a state can employ to stop the advancement of terrorist machinations is counterterrorism. The biggest counterterrorism efforts have been carried out by U.S. as a reaction to 9/11 attacks. Despite the assault on Al-Qaeda, it continues to exist if not as mighty it used to be but has managed to infiltrate in the web of networks it created to sustain itself. In an attempt to chase one enemy U.S. skipped keeping a track of another which later surfaced as ISIS. The group was much bigger in power, status, territory, and recruits. Terrorism and counterterrorism are two sides of the same coin and at the same time acts as a nemesis to each other. Effective counterterrorism can destroy terrorism and terrorism can be resilient to flawed counterterrorism policy. The U.S. counterterrorism policy after 9/11 was constructed to uproot terrorism as stated on "war on terror" rhetoric and cure the disease of terrorism from spreading to other parts, which it could not accomplish fully instead acting as a catalyst in some occasions. Al-Qaeda is present in more places today than it

was in 2001, and could not avoid ISIS which is more or less rebranding of Al-Qaeda's franchise in Iraq and have accomplished what its predecessors could not.

U.S. counterterrorism policy proved to be successful in the initial phase when Al-Qaeda's bases were destroyed in Afghanistan but this success was overshadowed by its resurgence. The counterterrorism policy has been successful in killing and capturing high ranking members from Al-Qaeda. Killing of Bin Laden came as a major blow to the group but the counterterrorism failed to recognise Al-Qaeda's strategic ideology which is why it is adaptive, resilient and compelling. Al-Qaeda has been manoeuvring strategically since the beginning which was revealed in 2005 by a Jordanian journalist Fouad Hussein. He interviewed a high-level Al Qaeda strategist Saif al-Adel, who defined seven stages to victory. Based on the interview Hussein came out with Al Qaeda's seven strategic points of establishing "Islamic Caliphate" within a span of twenty years. It laid out the systematic process to proceed towards the goal of establishing Islamic Caliphate:

- The first phase- The Awakening phase (2000-2003) 9/11 terrorist attack was meant to provoke U.S. into declaring a war against the Islamic world.
- The second phase was The Eye-Opening Phase (2003-2006) which made Al Qaeda into a global movement.
- The third phase- The Rising Up and Standing on The Feet Phase (2007-2010) aimed at expanding to new territories and building a network to carry out operations which were evident in West Africa and Syria.
- The fourth phase- The Expansion Stage (2010-2013) included toppling of apostate regimes in the Middle East.
- The fifth phase -The Declaration of Caliphate Stage (2013-2016) where Al-Qaeda would establish Islamic rule over the captured territories.
- The sixth phase- The Confrontation Phase (2016-2020) will occur between the believers and non-believers.
- The seventh phase- The Definitive Victory Phase (2020-2023) will be accomplished by the victory of establishing the Caliphate over rest of the world.

In 2014 when the establishment of the caliphate was announced the disturbing accuracy of these strategic trajectories were realised by the world. The grand strategy

put forward by Al-Qaeda was carried forward by ISIS and has worked so far, although the experts and scholars have debated about the futility of such a scheme in the long run. The seven point strategy for the supporters form important narrative for holding on to their belief.

9/11 rejuvenated U.S. counter-terrorism policy, and over the years it has emerged to be one of the main aspects of the U.S. foreign policy. The counter-terrorism strategy led to the innovation of several techniques to wipe out al Qaeda completely by punishing, denying sanctuary, and carrying out decapitation strikes. Other pillars of U.S. counterterrorism policy also included building partnership capacity, shoring up the homeland, and countering violent extremism. At the end of the decade, the Obama Administration launched a vigorous effort to counter violent extremism and relied more heavily on decapitation tactics, targeting special operations against individual cells and leaders, and ramping up drone attacks against al Qaeda leaders in the regions of Pakistan and in Yemen. The deployment of the military as a part of Bush "War on Terror" in Afghanistan and Iraq was followed by counterinsurgency program ,which made Taliban regime to collapse and al-Qaeda to lose its sanctuary in Afghanistan. But the 2003 invasion of Iraq and deposition of Saddam Hussein led to a sectarian conflict between the Sunni and Shia communities in the region, the deteriorating situation in Iraq gave al-Qaeda to infiltrate and spread. The Surge followed which involved more U.S. troops and a new counterinsurgency strategy.

The sectarian divide helped ISIS to gain a vigor which it exploited to gain a strong foothold in Iraq. The rise in sectarian violence in Iraq was the result of Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki marginalization of the Sunni community. ISIS benefited from the process of sectarian reshuffling in Syria where the civil war still continues which started in 2011, with the conflict between different militias against the minority Alawite regime of Assad.The "war on terror" relied on countering al-Qaeda on the operational level more than at its strategic level. According to a declassified judgment of National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) 2006, the invasion of Iraq by U.S. and its occupation resulted in the rise of radicalisation of Muslims and attracted foreign recruits to join the jihad to oust the U.S. forces from Iraq.

The counterterrorism policy under Bush was short-sighted and managed to curb threat only for a momentary victory, it lacked vision and appropriate strategic posture in

dealing with terrorism. U.S. managed to gather opprobrium from the Muslim world due to its treatment of suspected terrorists held indefinitely in detention camps of Cuba and Guantanamo Bay. The counterterrorism of Bush seemed more like lashing out of vengeance with cruelty and evilness against the Muslims in general rather than following a rational thinking about the consequences of such policy.

The split of ISIS from al-Qaeda was believed to dismantle both groups, but going against all odds the former surged and the other spread to other places. ISIS came to rule over a territory which al-Qaeda could not manage to do so. Usually split in a terrorist organization shows an increase of violence due to the competition between the split factions and this has started to show due to the hostility between al-Qaeda affiliate al Nusra Front and ISIS in Syria. Now the threat is divided into two groups which is constantly multiplying and trying to infiltrate in other parts of the world.

ISIS has redrawn the borders of the Middle East and imposed Islamic laws and rules with brutality and savagery over its subjects. The ideological radicalisation of ISIS has been greater than Al-Qaeda, which has managed to radicalize people all around the globe through its ideology and use of propaganda with such intensity that the results of it are already being visible through "ISIS inspired attacks" in western countries without even any direct command from the group. Hence, eliminating ISIS is not going to be an easy road for U.S., the chaos has just begun and bloody history is yet to be written before it gets corroded.

ISIS's influence keeps growing around the world, which has helped to "internationalize" the fight. The ISIS affiliate organizations have been carrying out attacks in the name of ISIS, including in Libya, Egypt, and Afghanistan. The internationalization of the attacks in other parts will pose a bigger problem for the coalition to tackle ISIS threat. The ISIS problem in the Middle East region has involved the major players in the region which will define their relationship with the U.S. in a different light. The reaction of states in containing ISIS has brought about new challenges and cooperation among the players involved and has influenced in building the foreign policies of these states.

Organization of the Study

The study aimed at finding the relation between U.S. counterterrorism policy and ISIS rise with the aim of understanding terrorism in contemporary time and the centrality of U.S. in countering the threat from a radical group like ISIS. The following research questions helped in giving direction to the study:

- What are the principle tenets of U.S. Counterterrorism strategy?
- What are the major differences between Counterterrorism and Counter-insurgency strategies?
- What are the major differences between the U.S. Counterterrorism policy in Afghanistan and ISIS?
- What were the factors responsible for the emergence of ISIS?
- How has the U.S. approached the rising threat from the ISIS?
- What are the implications of U.S. policy towards ISIS on the region?

The aim of the study was based on testing of pre-formulated hypotheses which were subjected to a thorough analysis leading to a conclusion if it were held true or not. The two hypotheses that were tested are:

- Counterterrorism measures by the U.S. have been responsible for expansion of terrorist activities in the Middle East.
- U.S. responses to ISIS have fomented the Shia Sunni divide.

1.3. Review of Literature

ISIS rise shaped the geography of the Middle East and shifted alliance between the regional countries and U.S. The terror of ISIS has stretched from Iraq to Syria inducing U.S. once again to re-engage in the region. Extensive U.S counterterrorism policy was invigorated in the aftermath of 9/11 and became a major driver of foreign policy issues. Given the importance of "war on terror" to fight Al-Qaeda, and evolution of a strong counterterrorism policy it contributed to the subject's popularity and making it mainstream in the terrorism discourse. Despite speculation about the U.S. counterterrorism policy, there was a gap in recognizing the brewing of another threat caused by ISIS whilst carrying out counterterrorism policy in Iraq by U.S.

With the evolution of ISIS from al- Qaeda, a new threat was observed and there was urgency in making a new strategy by the U.S. for countering it. Withdrawal of troops from Iraq had only begun to relieve U.S. of not getting militarily involved in the region until the Islamic State announced the establishment of the Caliphate comprising the territories of Iraq and Syria in June 2014 which created a crises situation leaving no other choice for U.S. apart from taking military action. After the rise of ISIS and its declaration of the establishment of Caliphate under Baghdadi's leadership, there is the need to learn about how ISIS became what it is today? Several works on the subject reveal the historical aspects which contributed to its rise and how the group operates. Patrick Cockburn (2014) in his book "**The rise of Islamic State: ISIS and the new Sunni Revolution**" views that the roots of ISIS lie in the surge of violent Islamic activism in the Middle East of the 1980s and the effects of the war against the Soviets in Afghanistan and western policymakers have shown little considerations in dealing with the conflict in Syria or the supposed peace in Iraq for several years.

One of the major problems in U.S. counterterrorism policy has been the lack of proper understanding of strategic goals of the terrorist groups. This malaise is ingrained to a certain extent which is attributed to the problem of generalization in the field of terrorism. Audery Cronin in her Article "**U.S. Grand strategy and counterterrorism**" (2012) explains the problem of lack of generalizations in studying terrorism which becomes inconvenient and hampers in carrying out successful drives against such groups. She views that al Qaeda survived by infiltrating local conflicts in places which are considered as weak states, but the local struggle has its own dynamics and interests which may not coalesce with that of Al Qaeda's interests, hence, defying generalization. The research on terrorism is viewed to be motivated by policy concerns only and the area has fallen into a trap where it is largely limited to government agendas. The field shows that there is little evidence over the years of inquiry to bring forth research of consistent explanatory value.

Targeted killings of terrorist leaders form one of the important component of U.S. counterterrorism policy goals in destroying ISIS. The leadership of any terrorist organisation is vital in making or breaking the organization. The leadership of Baghdadi has facilitated strengthening of ISIS after 2010 prior to which it had weakened due to Sunni Awakening and Surge of 2007 by U.S. forces. U.S. has

continuously attacked the major leaders of terrorist organisation given the significance of the groups leader. After Bin Laden demise al Qaeda was weakened, the opinion of many Americans, as Magnus Nordenman (2013) in his article "**The end of war on terror and the future of US counter terrorism"** explains that the killing of Bin Laden meant that "the dragon had been slain" and the 9/11 attacks had been avenged. But what has been witnessed after Laden's death there was replacement by Zawahiri and spread of Al-Qaeda into a larger network. Cronin (2008) in her book "**Ending Terrorism: Lessons for Defeating al- Qaeda"**, a widely noted scholar on how terrorist groups end, views that the work on the effectiveness of leadership decapitation remains in its infancy and the relationship between decapitation and a group's demise is not straightforward.

The real architect of ISIS Abu Musab al-Zarqawi was killed in an airstrike in 2006 and President George W. Bush announced that a "severe blow" had been given to Al Qaeda in Iraq's leadership. The next leaders in line were also killed in air strikes like Abu al-Masri and Abu Abdullah al-Bagdadi. The decapitation of the leaders from AQI gave the false impression that the organisation was being defeated, instead the intelligence could not figure out the clashing of ideas that had begun between Al-Qaeda under Bin Laden and Zarqawi's followers under AQI banner, ultimately making Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in rejuvenating the group and naming it as IS. Byman, D. (2006) in his article "**Do Targeted Killings Work**?" have evaluated the effectiveness of decapitation tactics, only few scholars have done so systematically. The vast majority of analyses rely on case studies to support a specific conclusion. Others have examined the effectiveness of decapitation tactics within a particular country, out of which Israel seems to be the most popular. Although these country and region-specific case studies help policymakers and scholars understand more about this controversial tactic, but the findings from these studies cannot be generalized across all terrorist groups. The type of structure and organisation is also significant in understanding the vulnerability of an organization to decapitation. Ideological organizations are most likely to experience a lessening of activity following the removal of a leader, while religious organizations are highly resistant to leadership decapitation.

In some cases the assassination of a leader does not contribute to radical transformation in a group's ideology (Langdon, et al 2004). Moreover the killing of a leader is followed by attacks on the group and loss of funding leading to failing of the radical group. Price (2012) "**Targeting Top Terrorist: How Leadership Decapitation Contributes to Counter-terrorism**" Analyzed the effects of leadership decapitation on the mortality rate of terrorist groups over a longer period of time. Price concludes that the religious terrorist groups were less resilient and easier to destroy than nationalist groups following leadership decapitation.

K. Bouzis (2015) in **"Countering the Islamic State: U.S. Counter-terrorism Measures",** argues that in order to combat ISIS U.S led coalition staged numerous kinetic tactics which included 5784 air strikes till April 8th 2015, given such amount of strikes it led the targeted group to revaluate and change its "modus operandi" .Due to the targeting of ISIS the strikes have had an unintended consequence of driving it into Turkey to plan their attacks.

The most prizing weapon for ISIS has been the use of digital communication networks. Its propaganda to radicalise youths all over the world has been tremendously successful. **Understanding Terror Networks"** book by Sageman (2004) views that the terrorist threat has evolved from a highly structured group of al Qaeda masterminds which issued commands to other informal local groups and he believes that movement to a leaderless terrorism will imply a failure of "traditional terrorism" but the modern communication especially the internet will change this as there is a tendency to rely on new forms of communication which make the terrorist organization even stronger.

In the aftermath of 9/11 the counterterrorism policy of U.S. has been tremendously criticized for carrying out the detention techniques against the established human rights laws. It employed a variety of tools out of which some were drawn from traditional warfare, some from crime fighting and others were new techniques developed to address this new kind of threat. The new techniques included indefinite detention without prosecution, enhanced interrogation, rendition to third countries, military tribunals, and targeted killing that successive U.S. administrations tried to justify under domestic and international law. The declassified key judgments of the seminal report of April 2006 National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) entitled, ''**Trends**

in Global Terrorism: Implications for the United States,'' which warned that the U.S. invasion and continued, occupation of Iraq radicalized the Muslim world and potentially generated untold new terrorist recruits.

The 2003 invasion of Iraq was an enormous strategic mistake as viewed by the critics. In addition to the high cost in blood and treasure, he points out that as Iraq became the primary focus of the U.S. military, critical resources were diverted from Afghanistan which allowed the Taliban and al-Qaeda to rebuild their organization. One of the reasons for increase in Islamic terrorism has been due to the Bush "war on terror" policy. The legacy of the war paradigm increased violence and conflict in the Middle East. The literature suggests that how new type of radicalism has evolved with the rise of sectarian violence between Shia and Sunni communities, evident in Jason Burkes work (2015) "**The New Threat from Islamic Militancy**", that Islamic militancy is the consequence of the misguided Iraq wars, the collapse of regimes in the Arab spring of 2011, the shift of regional power bases and the widening gulf between Sunni and Shia.

The goal of Obama's policy against ISIS has been to curb extremism from all around the world and address the issues contributing such extremism. His counterterrorism has incorporated the Long-term approach as mentioned by Crelinsten (2014) by using measures that addresses the problem at the structural level rather than immediate fixes. The effort has been made to use developmental model by providing financial aid, promoting education, so that the radicalisation can be nipped at the bud. Obama did not emphasize on Democracy promotion like Bush as Stern (2015) expresses that Bush considered Democracy promotion as the most efficient way to defeat terrorism and extremism by making the rule of majority it often relegates the minorities to the background. This makes the minority disenfranchised and allows extremism to thrive. Obama instead of focusing on democracy promotion tried to curb the tide of extremism in war torn and disturbed places which is ripe for recruitment in militant organizations, and decided to address the underlying causes for such conditions

Gries, et al (2015) "**Oppressive governments, dependence on the USA and anti American terrorism**" in his new findings Used data from 126 countries for the period 1984-2008, which showed that a combination of local repression and military or economic dependence on U.S. resulted in more anti-American terrorism. This

relationship only breaks down at high levels of dependence. There is no evidence that the USA is made any safer by providing foreign assistance, even if this assistance is substantial or is channelled to highly oppressive regimes which might be less restricted in terms of their instruments of fighting terrorism.

The abrupt rise of ISIS has been combination of several factors including President Obama's mistake in overestimating the capability of the U.S. trained Iraqi forces. It was visible when Falluja in Iraq was overrun by ISIS and finally when Mosul was captured in June 2014 by ISIS. Norton (2014) in "**Obama's Middle East Headaches**" has viewed that the response by Obama to ISIS problem is intended to be a long-term campaign in quelling the threat rather than following a concentrated effort to destroy the group. The counterterrorism policy adopted by Obama has been composed of long-term approach rather than coercion, and has adopted negotiation and diplomacy to arrive at a solution. Given the role of regional powers in the Middle East where there is competition for regional domination and power between Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey also involvement of major European state like Russia supporting Assad in Syria, consensus is difficult.

Chapters Summary

The first chapter is the current chapter which is introductory in nature.

The second chapter traces the origins of U.S. counterterrorism policy and its evolution process by providing a background on domestic and international terrorism. It explores the factors that led U.S. in creating a well-defined counterterrorism policy by the turn of 20th century. It also gives an overview of various counterterrorism approaches and models which are significant in understanding the principles of U.S. counterterrorism policy.

The third chapter talks about the importance of 9/11 in U.S. history and examines the causes of attack by tracing the roots of modern Islamic fundamentalism. It also examines the causes for the creation of al-Qaeda and reasons that guided the attack. It looks into the various components of "war on terror", and analyses the effectiveness of such a policy in achieving its major goal.

The fourth chapter examines the rise of ISIS and its impact following its rise. It aims at understanding the role and ideology of ISIS and what makes it different from its predecessors. It explores the role of U.S. counterterrorism policy in Iraq and how it created conditions for extremism to grow and the sectarian violence to thrive. Along with other factors creating a perfect condition for ISIS to establish a caliphate.

The fifth chapter provides an overview of counterterrorism policy under Obama administration in response to ISIS rise. It analyzes the major elements of counterterrorism policy employed in defeating ISIS and the major point of departures from Bush's counterterrorism policy. In the end, it examines the result of U.S. counterterrorism policy deployed to fight ISIS.

The sixth chapter is an attempt to understand the role of regional states in the Middle East to fight ISIS and address the Syrian crisis. This chapter points out the effects of U.S. counterterrorism policy in a geopolitical setting which has changed the dynamics between the states. The threat from ISIS and the sectarian divide has led states to compete for regional dominance in addition to other problems emanating from the conflict.

The seventh chapter is the concluding chapter. It discusses the findings from the research.

Methodology

Research Design:

The research design applied for this study is mainly non-experimental design, due to the lack of control over the subject presented in the study, this design was compatible with this research. Under this design, time-series design has been applied which relied mostly on the data collection from secondary and primary sources. Case study design is part of this research through which the link between dependent and independent variables were studied and the hypotheses were tested successfully.

Qualitative Research:

The research is mainly qualitative in approach, the framework under qualitative approach seeks to explore phenomena and given the context and the area of the study this approach was conducive to study the phenomena of terrorism. Also, part of quantitative information were included while carrying out the research mostly in the form of survey reports, existing statistical reports.

Collection of Data:

The information has been used from both primary and secondary sources, the primary source includes materials like Presidential speeches, released film footage, official records, congressional hearings. The secondary sources for the research were accomplished through in-depth review and analysis of secondary information available in the published forms, which included data from books, media, journals, etc., along with the electronic data and results of surveys conducted by various organizations.

Chapter 2

Evolution of U.S. Counterterrorism Policy

Definitional Problem of Terrorism:

Terrorism is often used for addressing violence and has created confusion to what should and should not be termed as terrorism. The word has been used as a synonym for political violence in general. The perpetrator of terrorism can call themselves as freedom fighters, revolutionaries, and jihadists. The general public views terrorism to be incidents of bombings, hijackings, suicide bombings and other acts of violence targeted at unarmed civilians. Different understandings of the term have made experts in the subject to point out the difficulties in establishing a universal definition that is agreeable to all concerned in the field. Terrorism is a means used by an individual, a group, or a state, to achieve an end, through the use of violence. Terrorism has appeared in many forms and in different situations that a comprehensive definition is not possible.

The word terrorism appeared during the time of French Revolution when terror was unleashed by Robespierre to curb the oppositional voices or the "enemies of the revolution". Terrorism in its original sense meant State terrorism practiced by the French government during the 'Reign of Terror'. Over 200 years have passed since the first use of the term and it still lacks universally agreeable definition. There is an adage which says that one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter, hence terrorism is a relative term guided by one's perception and situation. For example, PLO believed that they were the liberators of Palestinians, it carried out acts of violence against Israelis and was considered a terrorist organization but it still got the support and sympathy of Arabs and from International community at large. Since the starting of the study of terrorism in the early 1970s, the problem of definition has acted as an impediment for analysis and continues to do so until today.

There are more than a "hundred definitions" (Laqueur 1999) of terrorism available in the literature. As definition affects the understanding of the phenomena, and without a clear definition, the policy prescription will not work effectively. Terrorism has been defined as "A specific weapon in the struggle for political power employed either by

groups of the extreme Left or the extreme Right but quiet frequently by national minorities" (Lacquer 1984). By the above definition, terrorism is highly subjective like in the 1960s and 1970s terrorism was understood in the revolutionary context, groups composing of nationalist, separatist or exiled minorities.

By 1980s terrorism was understood in a different light, mainly in the form of revolutionary or left extremism. The popular belief for left wing terrorist incidents appearing all across the globe was viewed as the conspiracy of USSR created to destroy 'the U.S. and the free world' (Sterling 1981). Later this view was replaced by the new perception that the main aim of the terrorist was to destabilize the West. There were regimes that became sponsors of terrorism like Libya, Syria, Iran, Iraq, carrying out suicide bombings and frequently attacking Americans. In the 1990s there came a trend of nacro-terrorism in which the criminal organizations made an alliance with terrorist groups for example Columbian drug cartels were linked with left-wing terrorist groups in Peru and Columbia. After 9/11 the meaning of terrorism was redefined, and it was understood in a truly global sense with its ideological roots in religious fundamentalism.

The understanding of terrorism differs from scholars to civilians, to government and to terrorist themselves. U.S. code defines terrorism "as premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents" (Griset and Mahan 2003). A simple definition of terrorism given by Hoffman is "deliberate creation and exploitation of fear through violence or the threat of violence in the pursuit of political change" (Hoffman 2006:40). Terrorism is the manifestation of violence, but any violence cannot be termed as terrorism. Hoffman also notes that terrorists consider themselves liberators or army for self-defense or even as seekers of righteous vengeance. Terrorism needs to be differentiated with other forms of political violence like guerrilla warfare, insurgencies.

There is a tendency to consider same acts of violence to be terrorism in some occasions and avoiding in other occasions, for example, assassinations could be considered as terrorist acts sometimes but not at other times. These types of occasions are usually based upon the assumed motivations of the perpetrators or the social standing of the victims (Weinberg et. al 2004). Some writers have the view of

identifying terrorism based on physical or social distance, like an act committed in another geographical region might not be termed as terrorism, but if the same act is carried out closer to home then it becomes terrorism.

Another difficulty in defining terrorism is due to its compartmentalisation in different types of terrorism like "state terrorism, oppositional terrorism, religious terrorism, criminal terrorism" (Ahmed1998:2). Walter Laqueur who has written extensively on the definitional problem of terrorism argues that a comprehensive definition may not be possible even in the future.

Alex Schmid (1992) proscribes a method to overcome the definitional problem to a certain extent. He views that non-state terrorism can be divided into 'four areas' first pertaining to the academic arena where scholars can have the definition to conduct a research on the topic. Secondly, on the state understanding of the term expressed in the form of laws, judicial rulings and regulation. Thirdly relating to public arena by which the mass media can interpret the subject and fourthly to those who are the perpetrators of terrorist acts themselves. Schmid's definition can be considered to be the most comprehensive definition of terrorism as he studied 109 definitions which he received from his respondents. In the variety of available definitions, there were common elements in the definition of terrorism. Out of the 109 definitions of terrorism the most commonly used terms were "violence or force", followed by the term "political violence", next term was "engendering fear or terror", next was the use of "threat", followed by the term "psychological effects".

Schmid defines terrorism as "it is an anxiety-inspiring method of repeated violent action, employed by (semi-) clandestine individual group or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal or political reasons, whereby — in contrast to assassination - the direct targets of violence are not the main targets. The immediate human targets of violence are generally chosen randomly (targets of opportunity) or selectively (representative or symbolic targets) from a target population, and serve as message generators. Threat- and violence- based communication processes between terrorists (organization), (imperiled) victims, and main targets are used to manipulate the main target (audiences), turning it into a target of terror, a target of demands, or a target of attention, depending on whether intimidation, coercion, or propaganda is primarily sought".

Phases of Terrorism:

Use of violence and terror has existed since time immemorial, the concept of terror goes way beyond to previous eras. In the contemporary world religious terrorism is the most popular form of terrorism that has become the major source of conflict and destruction in countries. The use of terror by religious groups is not a new phenomenon; like Sicarii in 66 AD. Another group was the Assassins a small Islamic sect which began in 1090. These groups showed characteristics of terrorism in their methods and goals. Assassinations of rulers and governmental figures have occurred throughout the history of human civilization and in certain cases, there have been justifications for such killings and use of terror, for example, Machiavelli in "The Prince" expresses his admiration for Ceaser Borgia for ruling his subjects with 'terror'. Tyrannicide was justified by Aristotle by viewing that those assassinated tyrants deserved such a fate. In the modern period some of the big events were influenced by occurrences that happened hundreds of years ago for example John Wilkes Booth when he assassinated Abraham Lincoln in 1865 he compared himself with Brutus who murdered the Roman dictator Julius Ceaser. Use of terror and violence has deep psychological impact which is intended by every terrorist group.

In the modern sense, the above-mentioned types of terror and violence must be differentiated because it doesn't fall within the confines of ideological politics. The ideological aspect of terrorism differentiates itself from the other form of terror and violence. Terror is associated with a psychological state pertaining to fear but when "ism" is added to "terror" then it implies some form of belief (Sullivan 1984). Terrorism and ideological politics are linked which helps us in separating and understanding modern terrorism from an earlier form of terror and violence. Ideological politics was the product of European thinking and it got its practical importance during the French Revolution which gave a realisation that it lay in men's will to make or break the society and not in some divine power which mostly lay in the hands of the monarch. The idea of self-determination was born and the idea of sovereignty underwent a change, it was not supposed to rest with the monarchs but with the people which led to the birth of the idea of Popular Sovereignty.

Terrorism was popularised during the French Revolution as put by Hoffman (2006) but had a "positive" connotation, in the sense that it was used as a means to establish

order when there was upheaval following the Revolution. In recent times the meaning and understanding of terrorism have undergone immense changes and in no manner it is understood as a positive term, rather it is an offensive term even for the terrorist themselves who tries to justify their acts of violence as a reaction to the injustice imposed on them. The coming of modern terrorism has been marked from the 1880s starting in Russia which soon spread to other parts of the world, in Western Europe, Balkans, and Asia. Revolutionary groups like Narodnaya Volya used terrorism to bring out political reform in tsarist Russia. Anarchy has been associated with the beginning of modern terrorism characterised by lawlessness, assassinations, and violence.

Modern Terrorism has been classified under different waves by David C. Rapport starting from the 1880s characterized by its spread in other countries driven by similar ideology and tactics by the participating groups, and continuing until its replacement or demise of each wave. The first wave was "Anarchist Wave" starting in the 1880s followed by second wave "Anti-colonial Wave" in 1920. The third wave was the "New Left Wave" starting in the 1960s and the fourth wave was "Religious Wave" starting from 1979 onwards (Rapport 2002). These categories as placed by Rapport speak about the centrality of revolution or change as the major aim of every wave. Each wave has been the result of some form of domination by a body of authority or institution, for example, the Anarchist Wave began to destroy the conventions of the society, violence was unleashed against the figures of higher authority, and assassinations became the weapon of choice. The second wave was the Anti-colonial Wave that started with the birth of treaty of Versailles after World War I. The idea of self-determination rose in the defeated states and contributed to ethno-nationalism. Groups like IRA was formed which aimed at gaining independence from the British by using terrorism. The third wave "New Left Wave" began in the 1960s which was preceded by the Vietnam War. The terrorist groups of this wave were encouraged by the resilience of Viet Cong against a powerful state like America despite of its inferior weaponry. This exposed the weaknesses of capitalism and imperialism of the west. It generated radicalised groups in the third world and in western countries itself, like West German Red Army Faction (RAF), Italian Red Brigade, Independent Red Army becoming the forerunners of such groups in third world countries. They were supported by the Soviet Union with arms and training. The fourth wave also the

present wave started in 1979 with the emergence of PLO as a movement after the Six Day War of 1967 leading to Israeli victory. Since then the religious wave of terrorism commenced with Islam at the heart of this wave.

Since 1970's the terrorism was characterised by the religious elements with overlapping ethnic identities. Palestinians, Armenians, Macedonians, Irish, and others are some of the examples who struggled for the creation of secular states by taking recourse to terrorism. Since the 1970s out of the several religious groups, Islamic groups have profoundly engaged in carrying out international attacks. The incidents culminating in 1968 hijacking of Israeli plane and 1972 Olympics massacre of Israeli athletes by the Palestinian groups threatened the western countries. Now the discourse of the developed states centered on the threat posed by terrorism to their hegemonic position in the world as pointed out by Ditrych (2014), it led to the hegemonic understanding of what legitimate violence is and what should be a just political order. After the 9/11 attacks, the discourse of terrorism has revolved around extremist Islamic groups which aimed at destabilising the western countries. The incident made the threat from terrorism as omnipresent and increased the vulnerability of states to harm.

Counterterrorism and its Approaches

Counterterrorism has become one of the essential parts of the governmental policy of a modern state. With the increase in terrorism related problems in today's world, counterterrorism is the means by which a country tries to contain the threat of terrorism. Counterterrorism is difficult to define and does not have a universally accepted definition. Paul Wilkinson writes "that here is no universally applicable counterterrorism policy for democracies because every conflict involving terrorism has its own unique characteristics" (Wilkinson 2003: 203). Counterterrorism is the policy and strategy that is aimed at curbing terrorism and its related threat by eventually eradicating the group. The U.S. Army Field Manual defines counterterrorism as "Operations that include the offensive measures taken to prevent, deter, pre-empt and respond to terrorism" (U.S. Field Manual 2006).

Counterterrorism measures may include traditional law enforcement efforts like arrests, investigations, expanding powers of police through legislation and other measures include military action, economic sanction, negotiations, international

resolution. There are preventive measures by hardening the potential targets such as increasing security protection, increasing security in airports, etc. The national governments make efforts to protect their citizens from harm and in the wake of 9/11, the governments all over the world have increased resources and devoted energy to counterterrorism measures. The success of counterterrorism policy lies in its effectiveness to prevent terrorist acts from occurring. It needs to be rational and effective with minimal damage, the government policies and agencies should have knowledge about the programmes before implementing it because most of counterterrorism policies and strategies are employed without proper evaluation (Cynthia L. Et al 2008). Since 9/11 there has been a massive proliferation of counter-terror measures and policies in the U.S. but its scientific evaluation for its effectiveness has not been satisfactory. This impedes the prospects of having a successful counterterrorism policy for future because without a proper knowledge of the strategies and programs being used it leads to increase in terrorism in some cases or doesn't have any effect.

Counterterrorism policies need to be changed along with the changing nature of the threat from terrorism. Terrorist groups keep adapting and so are their techniques, in 1980s plane hijackings were a common technique of terrorists, after 1990s suicide bombings became a trend in terrorism. Counterterrorism approach encompasses numerous methods which can be divided into different types and based on such types it can be further divided into theoretical models. Ronald Crelinsten (2014) has provided five different counterterrorism approaches, each approach has set of different models that existed before 9/11 and the models which came into existence after 9/11. Altogether there are five different approaches to counterterrorism- coercive, proactive, persuasive, defensive and long-term and each type has its separate models.

Coercive Counterterrorism: It is the use of hard power by the state for counterterrorism purposes, this type of authority can be abused by the state and is generally regulated legally by the rule of law either national or international. Without the restrictions on coercive powers by the police or military in the name of counterterrorism will violate the established laws and induce the state to create a reign of terror. Under this type there are two models the criminal justice model and war model.

The Criminal Justice Model: This model treats terrorism as a crime, as any terrorist activity inflicts harm and destruction of property, it is found in criminal laws of a nation universally. This model treats terrorism as an ordinary crime devoid of special procedures which seem to have a delegitimizing effect on the terrorists. Just the acts of the terrorists are criminalised and the emphasis is not laid on their ideological motives. But after 9/11 incident this type of model got modifications as several western countries created special terrorist offences that emphasized on the motive of the terrorists. Not only the acts of terrorism were considered as an offence but also included the membership in a terrorist organisation its financial support, recruitment, etc to be considered as a crime. This model has solely relied on the bureaucracy and is dependent on the complexity surrounding the government institutions, its benefits depend on how fairly the system is used and perceived by others.

The War Model: This model of counterterrorism treats terrorism as a war by representing the terrorist organization as an equivalent of a state because a war is fought between states. It is treated as a zero-sum conflict with the complete defeat of the enemy with maximum use of force. This model follows the law of war paradigm which lays down the rules for carrying out wars. The Geneva Convention of 1947 lays down the rules for the treatment of combatants after they surrender, the exception for this rule while fighting terrorism is "illegal enemy combatant" who uses stealth and hides their identity by not wearing a uniform is identified as terrorists and guerrillas. This model can lead to protracted struggle as it aims at complete defeat of the terrorists, for example 'war on terror' can only end with the victory over Al-Qaeda. It uses modern technological means like drones, satellite, sophisticated weapons. This model can be risky as it can escalate violence and bring down the governments to undemocratic rule (Parker 2007), hence this type of counterterrorism should be used under certain restrictive conditions and only when all the other measures fail.

Proactive Counterterrorism: This type of counterterrorism aims at preventing terrorism before it occurs. This is done by using intelligence agencies, policing and intrusive techniques like wiretapping, surveillance, profiling which aims at disrupting and preventing the terrorist plots before they occur. This approach requires coordination among various policy domains and governmental institutions as it has integrated approach encompassing policing, military strategy, intelligence, finance, immigration policy, development, etc to carry out proactive measures.

The Intelligence Model: The role of intelligence is central to proactive model. The gathering of information through proactive policing and security intelligence is done to have knowledge about the terrorist whereabouts to prevent an attack from taking place. This measure has been widely used by the U.S. government after 9/11 in the domain of intelligence and surveillance which raised concerns regarding breach of civil liberties and human rights. This type of model has therefore come in conflict with the due processes and has undermined the democratic ethos.

Persuasive Counterterrorism: This type of counterterrorism deals with understanding the ideas and notions for the use of terrorism and addressing them. It has various socio, political, religious, and ideological aspects. Terrorist groups have people on their side like supporters, recruits, sympathizers similarly counterterrorist also has constituencies like actors within government, allies, victims, mass public, corporations, the private sector, etc. This type of approach uses propaganda, through communication and providing incentives to those terrorists who seek to give up violence as an alternate to minimize terrorist threat.

Communicative Model: This model aims at creating an effect on the supporting audience of terrorist groups by denouncing terrorism without fuelling hate and insecurities through an effective communication. It is important to understand the communicative pathways in terrorist-counterterrorist interactions to avoid the undesired perceptions and misinterpretations. Promotion of public awareness without creating intolerance and hate gives an important element to this model.

Defensive Counterterrorism: It refers to the preparation involved for the inevitability of a terrorist attack by determining the variables that effect the nature of the attack and its target.

The Preventive Model: This model aims at target hardening of critical infrastructure, and monitoring the flow of goods, money, people, and services. Target hardening aims at potential targets like VIPs, buildings, important events, which makes them difficult to be attacked which often leads to substitution of the target to softer targets. Monitoring the flow of logistical support impedes the terrorist preparation for an attack.

The Natural Disaster Model: This model is applicable to a situation after the commencement of a terrorist attack. Terrorist attack resembles a natural disaster from various points this model proscribes planning of contingency, emergency supplies, strategy in dealing with the victims to have a cost effective and well-planned outcomes.

The Public Health Model: Mass casualty terrorism affects the public health, terrorism involving WMD, CBRN attacks and the threat of pandemics needs emergency preparedness and environmental safety. Having a strong public health system will create infrastructure for responding effectively to such threats.

Long-Term Counterterrorism: This type of approach involves identifying the root causes and structural factors that permit conditions for terrorism to thrive. This type of counterterrorism caters to long term goals. The structural factors like poverty, ideology, discrimination, etc are triggering factors which involve interpretations of certain situations or events that is used to influence and recruit potential terrorists (Bjorgo 2005). Structural factors take time to evolve hence this type of counterterrorism deploys long-term strategies that aim at making terrorism less attractive to the potential terrorists.

The Development Model: This model views that by implementing developmental projects and foreign aid it can undercut the ideological aspect that motivates the terrorists to become radicalised. Building capacity of weak states by providing police, military assistance, judicial reform and foreign aid forms a part of long-term counterterrorism strategy.

The Human Rights Model: By promoting socio-economic rights and eliminating the inequalities in the society can reduce the radicalisation process of terrorist groups. Promotion of political and civil rights of the disenfranchised can minimise the option for those to take recourse to violence. Emphasis is given on the role of education which inculcates democratic, anti-racist, pluralistic values which can stimulate critical thinking and self-awareness.

The Gender Model: This model addresses the inequalities that persist between male and female ratios. The outnumbered male ratios in Asian societies have a higher tendency to get drawn towards radicalisation. Overpopulation leads to various

economic and employment problems which create a drive to becoming a terrorist. This model aims at empowering women and educating them to have a better socio-economic life.

The Environmental Protection Model: Due to change in climate there is a risk of having conflicts over resources. Many countries of the world will face conflicts due to environmental changes in future including the threat from environmental refugees. This will undermine the traditional counterterrorism efforts. This policy area needs to be addressed under long-term counterterrorism policy.

Domestic Terrorism in the U.S.:

The FBI defines domestic terrorism as "the unlawful use or threatened use of violence by a group or individual based and operating entirely within the United States or its territories without foreign direction committed 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 first incident of recorded terrorist activity took place in 1622 (Fausz 2006) where Native American killed around 30% of the white population in Virginia. Home-grown terrorist groups had left/right, religious, supremacist orientations. In the 1960s and 1970s many left wing terrorist organizations emerged, for example, "Weather Underground" which was a radical left student group who aimed to overthrow the American government in opposition to the involvement in Vietnam War. There was "Symbionese Liberation Army" influenced by communism and South American revolutionaries and resorted to violence ranging from kidnappings, assassinations, robbery. The leftist terrorist groups of the 1970s believed in Marxist communist ideologies, these groups used guerrilla tactics when their demands were not heard by the government. "Black Panthers" was another terrorist group whose aim was to protect African Americans.

There were right winged radical groups associated with the Aryan Nations Group like The Covenant, The Sword, The Order, these groups were religious in nature which followed radicalized Theology, promoted Christianity identified with militancy and had Neo-Nazi underpinnings. In U.S. the immigrants settled in the country were involved in terrorist activities who wanted to fight for the cause of their homeland.

The immigrants were mostly Nationalist- separatist group and took recourse to terrorism like Croatian Freedom Fighters who skyjacked the plane demanding freedom of Croatia from Yugoslavia. Anti-Castro Cubans opposed to the Castro regime were present in the U.S. like Alpha 66, El Poder Cubano, Omega 7, The Cuban National Liberation Front and many others, they carried out their operations against the regime mostly from 1960. There were about one thousand (Trick 1976) such Cuban groups in Miami alone, who were working against Castro and resorted to bombings and hijacking tactics.

There were several Puerto Rican terrorist groups having Marxist-Leninist ideology like Fuerza Armandes de Liberacion Nacional (FALN), Moviemento Independencia Revolucionario Armando (MIRA), Comandos Armandos de Libercion (AL), they condemned the American imperialism and wanted complete independence from the U.S., these groups resorted to bombings and assassination in the major American cities. Another form of home-grown terrorism was the eco-terror movement, they were concerned with the ill effects of the technological revolution which would damage the environment. Groups like The Earth Liberation Front targeted urban sprawl in New York in 2000, responsible for destroying many buildings and construction area. There are religious anti-abortion group like the "Army of God" who believes in pro-life concept and have committed violence by bombing abortion and birth control clinics. The far-right religious terrorist group like Jewish Defence League which aims to protect Jews from anti-Semitism in the U.S. carried out acts of terrorism in the U.S. Apart from these mentioned groups the domestic terrorism in U.S. is a major problem, there are racist, hate crime, anti-government groups which propagate violence and terror.

Graff (2011) views that he counterterrorism measures for domestic terrorism did not get proper investigative treatment even by the historians Terror-related occasions in the domestic front were mostly perpetrated by radical and leftist movement and police and covert techniques were used in curbing domestic terrorism. Some of the worst attacks in the history of U.S. were carried out by the domestic terrorist groups within the country. LA Times building bombing in 1910 killed 21 people and injured several others (Irvin 2010). It was considered as one of the major attacks "of the century" committed by the Mc Namara brothers belonging to Bridge and Structural Iron

Workers Union. The government reacted by arresting union leaders all over the country.

In 1919 bombings took place in several cities and FBI was directed to carry out the raids. It got wide authority to act without warrants, 5000 people (Mahan and Griset 2008) were taken into custody and many deported. The 1920 Wall Street bombing incident killed 30 people and injuring several others (Federal Bureau of Investigation 2007), the suspect of the bombing was initially thought to be a ploy of Anarchist groups but a lack of evidence could not prove anything substantial and later it was thought to be a role of communists in planting the bomb. As a result, the government cracked the suspects with a heavy hand. The palmer raids got intensified, the immigrants were the victim of the raid who were detained without any factual evidence. The U.S. government was drenched in paranoia from communism threat, which led to the deportation of thousands of immigrants. Another major incident of domestic terror attack was the bombing of Alfred P. Murrah Federal building in Oklahoma City in 1995 causing 168 Americans to lose their lives.

Before Oklahoma incident, terrorism was viewed mostly as an overseas problem (Watson 2002). The U.S. government treated domestic terrorism as a law and order problem with FBI taking the major charge of curbing domestic terrorism. FBI became the foreign intelligence service during the 2nd World War and Special Intelligence Service was established in 1940 and since then Secret intelligence started to operate internationally. The use of surveillance programme by U.S. dates back to World War II to curb the threat of communism by "wire tapping conversations and opening mails" (Weiner, 2012) which was undertaken by the Bureau of Investigation(predecessor of FBI) instituted during the time of Russian Revolution.

International Terrorism and U.S.:

The event in 1968 is significant when Israeli El Al flight was hijacked from Rome to Tel Aviv by the members of Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). It was significant in the history of global terrorism because this event became the precursor of numerous other trans-border terror attacks also it was the first time when a terrorist group demanded release of prisoners in lieu of hostages. Another event was in 1972 the attack on Israeli athletes in Olympic Games held in Munich by the

Palestinian Black September terrorist group. These events struck the world with awe and shock, which was widely publicised through a live television broadcast. It signalled that a new form of warfare had begun. Terrorism became one of the greatest threats of all time. It was considered unprecedented in a sense due to its reach to the audience worldwide facilitated by the improved global communications. The shift towards upsurge in international terrorism was due to the desperate state of Palestinians after the defeat in Six-day war with Israel of 1967, since then the radical Palestinians began series of international attacks. PLO became the major exporter of techniques of terrorism worldwide by late 1970s. Along with the era of modern international terrorism there was the looming threat of nuclear terrorism. Terrorism since 1970 came to challenge the status quo of the international system and they became an elusive and stateless force.

The hostage-taking of American diplomats and citizens in 1979 in the U.S. embassy in Iran, exposed the vulnerability of Americans abroad. In October 1983 the U.S. marines stationed at Beirut International Airport in Lebanon for peacekeeping mission was attacked by Hezbollah with explosion amounting to more than 12000 pounds of TNT killing 241 U.S. military personnel (Department of Defence 1983). U.S. administration was unable to solve the hostage crisis which led to the unpopularity of President Carter who lost to Regan in 1980 elections. Regan gave higher priority to solve international terrorism after being elected. It was realised that U.S. was lagging behind in human intelligence capacity to avert such a threat. Due to the rising threat of terrorist groups being used against the U.S. by its adversaries, President Regan aimed at avoiding other states from emulating such roles and signed National Security Directive to develop a military option for dealing with the state sponsor of terrorism. On December 1988 another international incident happened which had mass casualties, the bombing of Pam Am Flight 103 bound from London to New York killed 259 people and 189 (CNN Library 2015) were Americans.

The domestic terrorism started to decline by 1970s and was replaced by even bigger global threat arising from international terrorism. The incidents of plane hijackings by the leftist radicals en route to Cuba, who were against Castro regime was becoming lesser of an issue when the agreement was reached between U.S. and Cuban government for the safe return of passengers. By 1980s FALN (Puerto Rico) continued with its struggle for independence but this type of movements had lost its

ability to threaten the U.S. administration so it became the issue that was confined to the police to handle rather than being a priority issue of national security. All the radical and leftist movements at home which became popular during the Vietnam War like the "Weather Underground", and black radical movement like "Black Panther" started to diminish. The perception that these movements radical activism were fomented by international communist connection could not be proved by the CIA (Graff 2004) which was initially thought to have by the Nixon administration. The revolutionary terrorism and radical movements in the U.S. started to wither away due to problems in the organization itself like divisions, rifts and also the ending of Vietnam War which was one of the major causes for riots and disruption that had plagued in American society.

It became a legitimate concern for U.S. when violence due to internal conflicts from other countries spilled to international borders. Very soon the lethality of terrorist attacks increased due to the increase in ethnic hatreds and religious extremism which motivated the terrorist to carry out attacks. According to State Department figures 1970s witnessed attacks mainly on property and institution, but from 1980s the civilians were the main targets. Between 1968 and 2005 out of 22,457 incidents, worldwide 16% affected were Americans (Naftali 2005). The realisation by the U.S. government regarding terrorism changed from mere law and order issue to a national security issue which needed to be dealt with immediate urgency. International terrorism became a priority for U.S. also because there was a decline in the volume of domestic terrorist attacks for various reasons.

The chart below shows the attack on American citizens from 1969 to 2001:

International Terrorism Against the U.S., 1969–2009: Fatalities and Injuries

Source: Calculations by the Heritage Foundation's Center for Data Analysis based on data from the RAND Database of Worldwide Terrorism Incidents, at http://www.rand.org/nsrd/projects/terrorism-incidents.html (April 18, 2011).

Chart 7 • SR 93 ☎ heritage.org

Source: Heritage.org

Since 1980s religion played a major role in transforming the terrorism to a newer understanding. Although religious terrorism had existed long before it got a revival with Muslim Brotherhood as early as 1920s that believed in militancy and jihad. Extreme Islamist movement rose in almost every Muslim countries but only a few organizations like Hamas, Hezbollah Al-Qaeda carried out effective campaigns. In David Rapport's analysis of the four waves of terrorism he writes that "religion has a vast significance in the fourth wave, supplying justifications and organizing principles for the new world to be established" (Rapport 2002).

Mark Juergensmeyer in his "stage theory" tried to explain how religious impulse can lead to terrorism. The terrorist sees through polarised perspectives leading to a dichotomy between us and them, and divinity forms a part of this view, the struggle turns into a "cosmic war" between the evil and good forces (Graff 2011). Hoffman (2006) argues, that this new type of terrorism produces radically different value systems, mechanisms of legitimation and justification, concepts of morality and, worldviews as a result, religious terrorism represents a very different and possibly far more lethal threat than that posed by more familiar, traditional terrorist adversaries.

Modern international terrorism got embedded into a religious paradigm, with Islam becoming the main driver for the terrorists. Israel and Palestinian cause became the precursor for encouraging other Islamist terrorist groups to crop up later. The birth of organisations like PLO, PFLP, Hamas, Abu Nidal group, were due to the cause of nationalism and used terrorism as means to achieve their goals.

Islamic extremism got revived by the end of the 20th century, and Middle East, North Africa became the heartthrob for terrorist organizations to thrive. In Egypt most of the terrorist groups were off shots of Muslim Brotherhood. The Iranian revolution of 1979 established theocracy in modern times, the revolution was meant to uphold the Islamic principles by ousting the Shah of Iran who had leanings towards the West. This revolution not only attracted the Shia Islamic community but also the Sunnis and set an example by overthrowing pro-western regimes and the Muslim world can return to Sharia laws under a fundamentalist interpretation. There was upheaval in Muslim countries which had nationalist agendas, in Turkey fundamentalism grew from Kurdish PKK which emerged from leftist orientation later turned into a radical nationalist group who wanted to have an independent state. In the Indian sub-continent terrorism grew in Kashmir, Punjab, Bangladesh, Pakistan.

State sponsor of terrorism was another feature of international terrorism that re-emerged during the 1970s. The states used terrorist as proxies to fight against the opponent, for example, Iran supported Hezbollah and Hamas, Pakistan used terrorism as a weapon to defy India over Kashmir issue. It became apparent that groups like Hezbollah and Hamas posed a serious threat to Western countries especially U.S. and Israel. Use of terrorism as a state apparatus is beneficial for the government due to fewer expenses involved compared to the use of states military arm to use against the opponent. Another factor is the reticence by the government for a commitment of act of terror. Governments supported terrorism due to the ideological empathy towards the terrorist groups, for example, Afghanistan gave safe havens to Al-Qaeda to get support with men and weaponry to pursue the civil war against the Northern Alliance (Byman 2003). PLO got support and sympathy from Arab nations and got a supply of arms and money to carry out terrorist acts against Israel.

As 20th century neared to its end terrorism was no longer explainable in left or right ideological dichotomy or from a revolutionary viewpoint. Terrorism got manifested

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through religiously motivated Ethnic separatist groups, sometimes one minority against another like in the former Yugoslavia and sometimes between different sects of a religion like the Shia and Sunnis. As the century approached its final decade the terrorist organizations like Al-Qaeda and ISIS became extremely violent with apocalyptic undertones. The beginning of 21st century saw the growth of extreme religious fanaticism as one of the major characteristics of terrorist groups. Western countries became the major target of the Islamic terrorist groups. There were several attacks prior to 9/11. The 1993 bombing of the World Trade Centre by Ramazi Yousef and his associates were linked to Egyptian cleric preacher of Islamic Jihad and later funded 2001 September attacks. Another incident was the plot to bomb Los Angeles International Airport in 1999 by Ahmed Ressam who was trained with Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. The bombing of U.S. embassy in Kenya, Nairobi, Dar Es Salaam conducted by Islamic Army for the liberation of the Holy Places later discovered had links with Osama bin Laden.

Technological aspect (internet, WMD) and globalisation are two main achievements of the new era which the terrorist groups have been able to take advantage for their purpose. Terrorism of today is more sophisticated in terms of use of weapons and techniques compared to 19th-century terrorists who relied on bullets and guns as their weapon to strike the target. The new era brought along sophistication in weapons and military hardware like WMD, this became a liability in case of its possession by terrorist groups. Terrorism was constructed as benefiting from modernity and globalisation but terrorisms objective stands to impede modernity and progress itself. Terrorism now uses modernity and fruits of globalisation as a means to attain its purpose for example ISIS carries an apocalyptic vision of world domination and aims at going back to fundamentalist teachings of Islam but at the same time it takes advantage of modern means of communications and technology to spread their ideology. Once more globalisation serves as an important permissive cause for the rise of international terrorism.

Evolution of U.S. Counterterrorism Policy

U.S. administration was faced with confusion in defining terrorism for a long time due to the incongruent nomenclature of the term as put by Naftali (2005). Terrorism was not defined as a major policy issue, the term was used interchangeably with violence

and dissent associated with guerrilla war, insurgency or revolutionary movements. Terrorism was seen as law and order problem in the society and the role of military and intelligence was subordinate to police for carrying out counterterrorism policies. The structuring of American counterterrorism policies started to take shape only after the coming of modern terrorism, particularly since the early 1970s and the discourse on the subject became prominent after September 2001 attacks.

The two important international events contributed to the emergence of counterterrorism policies. One was the members of PLPF orchestrated plane hijacking in 1968 and taking hostages for a month which had American passengers in it, then the other incident was the assassination of Israeli athletes in Olympics held in Munich by Black September group related with Palestine terror group in 1972. Since then the U.S. government have passed several laws and created institutions to curb terrorism, those laws and policies are the predecessors of the current counterterrorism policy. From the very beginning U.S. had no concession policy towards terrorists and remains so till date, but the counterterrorism policy over the years have developed into an asymmetric warfare which has come to encompass a wide variety of approach.

The Munich Olympics massacre of 1972 formally allowed insertion of counterterrorism and international terrorism in Washington lexicon. Nixon administration saw international terrorism as a federal problem. The State department created two committees and a coordinator of counterterrorism, CIA began collecting intelligence on terrorist organizations from around the world (Naftali n.d.). President Nixon established Cabinet Committee on Counterterrorism (CCCT) (The American Presidency Project 1972) which called for the coordination between the government agencies for preventing terrorism and take measures like the collection of intelligence and protection of U.S. installations and diplomats abroad and within the country. Though the administration was still under the communist threat fervour, terrorism did not get the highest priority in the policy objectives. The CCCT met several times, by then U.S. government had a comprehensive body of policies relating to terrorism, like protocols for responding to major international attacks, methods for dealing incidents related terrorist acts ranging from hijackings to hostage taking with studies related to classifying types of terrorism (Presidential Library and Museum n. d.) in a systematic manner. Prior to these incidents terrorism was not given a serious policy attention

though there were threat from communism related terrorist activities domestically, they were curbed by the FBI.

To avoid states from sponsoring terrorism like Iran U.S. made legislation to put sanctions on such states. Anti-terrorism laws were enacted by the Congress, for instance, the International Security Assistance and Arms Export Control Act of 1976 section 303 made the U.S. government to avoid giving any form of assistance to states that support terrorism in any form or giving sanctuary to the committers of international terrorism. Sale or export of military equipment was made illegal to countries supporting international terrorism or those countries that were in the "terrorism list".

After PLO was recognised as the representative of Palestinians, Arafat intended to give up terrorism which was a condition for him to make PLO as the representative of Palestine movement (Naftali 2005). This led to the breakaway of factions from PLO with the fear that Arafat would be sold off to Israeli demands. This gave leverage to U.S. and it made use of the situation by pursuing PLO to assist during the Lebanese civil war (Kumamato 1999). PLO also assisted in tracking down the assassin of U.S diplomat and helped in evacuating Americans from Lebanon. This revealed that the effectiveness of counterterrorism not only relies on hard power but sometimes persuasion and concession also works to make terrorist give up terrorism. But it was not until 1983 U.S embassy bombings and, Marine barracks attacks in Beirut International Airport that killed 241 American soldiers that made U.S. administration to take up proactive counterterrorism measures against the threat of international terrorism.

Another important legislation was the "long arm statute" of the Omnibus Diplomatic Security and Antiterrorism Act of 1986. This act provided security for Americans living abroad that made it a federal crime for a terrorist who harm or try to harm by threat, killing, detaining or injuring an American citizen. It covered security for diplomats in foreign lands who were mostly the victims of terrorist targets abroad, it also provided a framework for state authorities to coordinate in fighting international terrorism, and the nuclear security-related aspect in international terrorism. Another point was the multilateral cooperation with other states, it also provided legal authority to American law enforcement agencies to conduct the investigation overseas.

After the 1990s the counterterrorism measures now aimed to "deter and pre-empt" terrorist groups. According to the 9/11 commission report, the National Security Council was made stronger and emphasis was laid on better coordination with foreign partners for counterterrorism purposes (9/11 Commission Report 2004). Fear of use of WMDs by the terrorist groups was another concern faced by U.S. The FBI submitted a report to Congress that gave importance on capabilities and interagency roles while handling the threat relating to WMD terrorist incidents. The expenditure for counterterrorism efforts was also expanded between 1994- 2000 which now amounted to $10bn (Donohue 2001).

Clinton established the Advisory Panel to Assess Domestic Capabilities for Terrorism Involving Weapons of Mass Destruction in 1999. The counterterrorism policy now included training and response capabilities. The major features of Clinton Counterterrorism policy has included Economic sanctions, multilateral co-operations, retaliation, and an increase in allocation of resources, Badey (2006) that these measures can be considered as the cornerstone of present counterterrorism policy. However, despite the warnings contained in the various reports, as well as numerous intelligence assessments advising of increased terrorist activity directed against the homeland during the winter and summer of 2001, terrorists were still able to execute the devastating September 2011 attacks.

By the end of the last decade of 20th century, U.S. counterterrorism policy included the use of sanctions mechanism against the perpetrators of terrorism. For instance, sanction was put on Iranian petroleum resources due to Iran's support for international terrorism, and its efforts in acquiring WMD. Another aspect was the strengthening of international cooperation among the states through multilateral treaties and agreements.

The evolution of counterterrorism was a slow process due to the changing nature of the international terrorism itself. The techniques of terrorist groups changed over time from plane hijackings by PFLP to suicide bombings introduced by Hamas to the use of chemical agents by Aum-Shinrikyo in 1995 to mass casualty terrorism by Al-Qaeda. Along with the various legislation passed by the U.S. government for counterterrorism, its evolution was also affected by the revolution in military affairs which pertains to advancements in military technologies combined with computer

technologies used in counterterrorism strategies. From just making legislation to curb terrorism U.S. counterterrorism policy evolved immensely over the past three decades. 9/11 gave a chance to build elaborate counterterrorism policies which seem to overshadow the foreign policy of U.S. at times.

Principles of U.S. Counterterrorism Policy

The approach to counterterrorism policy has continued to evolve. The result of U.S. counterterrorism policy has mixed record so far. It was able to stop potential terrorist attacks from occurring at the same time it was not able to stop Al-Qaeda from spreading into other regions. Cronin (2012) argues that there are conceptual flaws in U.S. strategic thinking in counterterrorism which follows the intellectual tradition from Cold War period. 9/11 gave the assumption that the goal of Al-Qaeda was compellence; basically meant to influence stopping of unwanted behaviour. Al-Qaeda attacked U.S. to make it withdraw troops from Muslim countries, which U.S. saw it to be the main goal of Al-Qaeda. But its ultimate objective was to reinstate caliphate and not the attack on U.S. This made U.S. carry out counterterrorism efforts on operational and tactical level rather than understanding the strategic ends of the Al-Qaeda. The role of counterterrorism has to include a wider understanding of the objective of the terrorist to defeat it. Hence the U.S. counterterrorism policy is based on a tactical and operational level which follows a set of principles to have an effective outcome.

Since 9/11 there has been clarity on counterterrorism goals, there are certain principles followed by counterterrorism policy of U.S. The first principle is *Retaliation* against terrorists. It aims at injuring the terrorist group physically by attacking its bases, disrupting its network and destroying it. This principle involves the use of military and hard power capabilities, although U.S. has never stopped itself from using its military war machine; Alexander and Kraft (2008) views that even a pragmatic leader like President Bill Clinton deployed cruise missiles against Baghdad in 1993 in retaliation for its plot to assassinate former President George H.W. Bush. The retaliation principle allowed U.S. administration to make use of coercive counterterrorism approach to address the threat from terrorism. Coercive counterterrorism methods were employed by the Bush administration and the debate was surrounded around war model and criminal justice model (Crelinstein 2014). The war model treats terrorism as a war in a conventional sense and terrorist organisation as an equivalent to the state.

Annihilation of the enemy is the ultimate goal of this model even if the conflict gets prolonged. The "war on terror" declared by Bush embraced this model and got engaged in a protracted conflict against Al-Qaeda but with partial success in defeating it. The criminal justice model requires treatment of terrorism as a crime and punishable under the due processes of law which champion the democratic values. U.S. counterterrorism has been shaped by this model since 9/11 with the introduction of special terrorist offences act, for instance, U.S. PATRIOT Act was passed to deter terrorist attacks by including various strict provisions to criminalize any activity associated with terrorism.

Another principle is *Prevention*, one of the basic aims after 9/11 for U.S. was to prevent such attacks from taking place in future on the U.S. soil. This principle incorporates proactive measures for counterterrorism. The preventive principle has guided U.S. administration to avoid any further terror attacks from taking place. Homeland security has been shored up in the aftermath of 9/11 and there has been better coordination of police, intelligence agencies, border force to keep a track on any terror-related movements. Since 9/11 the role of intelligence in conducting counterterrorism has increased dramatically. The use of surveillance systems, wiretapping, profiling, disrupting terrorist finances, etc forms an effective means in thwarting terrorist plots. Prevention principle has contributed to destroying the terrorist training camps and carry out targeted killings of the terrorist leaders. It allows in curtailing the plots at the planning stage but at times it can clash with the higher principles of democracy and established law. For instance, the use of mass surveillance and detention of suspects resulted in infringement of civil liberties and human rights violation.

The third principle is *Rehabilitation*, this principle is important in restoring weak and failing states which are generally the harbinger of conditions that allows radicalisation. Rehabilitation is important to address the structural causes that allow terrorism to thrive. Various developmental programmes which are included in the counterterrorism measures aims at uplifting weak states, and societies through economic development, democracy promotion, foreign aid, developmental projects to cut out the structural causes for the rise of terrorism. U.S. counterterrorism policy intends to stop radicalisation process among the disenfranchised through its transfer of economic and capacity building assistance to the countries affected by terrorism. Counterinsurgency

has been associated with counterterrorism policy applied in Afghanistan and Iraq which incorporates not only defeat of insurgents but also winning heart and minds of the local population through the promotion of good governance and assisting the host nation in building a strong government. The two concepts of counterterrorism and counterinsurgency are different but the lines have been blurred in the contemporary context.

Chapter 3

The 9/11 Incident and "War on Terror"

Importance of 9/11 in World History

9/11 was seen as a moment when everything changed in the discourse of U.S. policy narrative, it was a break from the past that marked a timeline in the History, clearly dividing the periods as "pre 9/11" and "post 9/11". It played its role in the official discourse which had been arguing for a review of its foreign policy and national security to make a transition from cold war period of having a renewed American stand in world politics. 9/11 representation held the ideological backbone for Bush doctrine by promoting Democracy, Unilateralism, destroying rogue regimes and dictators. As David Holloway puts it that "war on terror" was a rhetorical construction which represented the events and stories about 9/11 and Americas place in the world (Holloway 2008).

The event of 9/11 has been sometimes compared to the Pearl harbor incident due to the similarities in mass casualties and destruction that both the events generated. Habermas expresses that 9/11 if it is considered to be an important landmark in history then it should be compared with an event which had a massive historical impact, like World War I rather than Pearl harbour because World War I gave rise to a new era unleashing the age of modern warfare, totalitarian oppression and end of peace. But only in retrospect one can see if it was such a break in the history or rather just an attack that showed the vulnerability of the civilisational system. 9/11 can be called a historic event in the sense of the impact and slow collapse of the symbolic structures (Borradori 2003).

The attack on the twin tower and Pentagon were symbolic in nature which was meant to damage the economic and military might that U.S. had maintained for a long time. Derrida reads 9/11 as a symptom of "autoimmune crisis" which meant the suicide of the defensive mechanism that was supposed to protect the organism from external threat. 9/11 according to him was a finale act of Cold war phase, where the hijackers who fought against the Soviets turned against U.S. who had provided them with training in the 80s. Very soon the concept of "Clash of the Civilizations" theses by

Huntington found its resonance within popular media. Huntington had argued that the tension in world politics would be defined by different cultural identities and wars would be fought due to cultural and civilizational differences. The central area of confrontation will occur between Islam and the West (Huntington 1993), this idea went mainstream after 9/11. Huntington viewed that the civilizational differences were far more fundamental than the ideologies and politics, and the differences would persist in the future. He wrote that the differences in culture and religion will provide friction in several global policies ranging from the environment to immigration to human rights issues.

During Cold War, the question asked was on which side are you on? And people could choose sides but in the conflict between civilizations, the question will be what you are rather than which?. The commencement of the 21st century was marked by the catastrophic event of 9/11 revealing the dangers of international terrorism to an omnipresent threat to the countries of the world with elusive terrorist force. This event became the precursor of other conflicts and events leading to turmoil and wars, making it unprecedented in the History.

Islamic Fundamentalism in Afghanistan

The Mujahiddin: The historical background of Al-Qaeda can be traced back to the cold war period when it was at its demise, its antecedents were evolved in a way that was mastered by the ideological battle that existed in the bipolar world. Afghanistan was created out of several tribal fiefdoms and from the time of British rule in 19th-century resistance to the foreign power domination was witnessed during the Anglo-Afghan wars .Though the foreign relations of Afghanistan was retained by the British, this made the Afghans think that their identity was subdued by the foreign power and saw reform and modernization a Western innovation with skepticism and had to be resisted. During Nadir Shah's rule, he made Afghanistan a fully fledged Islamic fundamentalist country by adhering to the interpretation of Sharia during the 1930s. As Dilip Hiro views that the traditionalist thinkers blamed such a state of backwardness on the Muslim leaders who did not follow Islam and Sharia truthfully.

While the nationalist modernists argued that Islam and progress were not to be seen as a contradiction instead Islam propagated the Muslims to seek knowledge, Sharia demanded social welfare, justice which can be applied through the use of reason and

can be cultivated by education, it called for creative interpretation which was not known in the Sunni world, this view was held by the handful of Islamic thinkers but the majority viewed "modernization to be antithetical to the Islamic society" (Hiro 2002:189). The Mujahidin fighters were drawn from madrassas in Pakistan and they grew on such fundamentalist ideas. the Soviet Union was forging alliance with regimes where it thought could be successful in spreading communism, with a confidence of having fought against several varieties of resistance like the guerrilla warfare in Vietnam and having controlled many Islamic societies like Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan in Eastern Europe and setting up a puppet regime in Czechoslovakia successfully the Soviet Union thought that Afghanistan would become one of the regimes controlled by it but it didn't see that this venture would prove to be a virulent one.

The resistance against the Marxist regime that was installed after the Saur revolution of 1978 grew and the religious opposition was repressed through arrest and executions. The refugees moved to Pakistan and mostly joined anti- Marxist parties in Pakistan, there were various groups based on fundamentalist beliefs led by Hikmatyar, Rabbani and other religious groups who supported returning to constitutional monarchy, apart from these there also existed nationalist and secular factions. The fundamentalist group later rose as Mujahidin, a clan of warriors which emerged to fight against the Communist forces which were the result of Islamic fundamentalism that grew in Kabul University those opposed the corruption of the royal family and Marxism. People like Hikmatyar and Rabbani were leaders who lead Mujahidin, who got support from Pakistani establishment.

The young religious Afghans were influenced by the teachings of modern Islamic thinkers who were against the orthodoxy of the traditional ulemas, they embraced Sharia along with the understanding of social problems. Thinkers like Maududi argued that Islam was self-sufficient and very different from Western societies which were morally corrupt, but the Muslims should pursue scientific knowledge in order to defend Islam. The Mujahidin was ready to fight the battle against the communist forces and remove the infidels from Afghanistan, their motivation was entrenched in the fact of them being Muslims who needed to protect their lands from the foreign rule and save Islam.

Assistance was provided in the form of money and weapons by the U.S. and training by Pakistani ISI. U.S. along with the help from Pakistan provided training to the tribal fighters, the Pakistani President Zia-Ul-Haq took an anti-soviet stand from the very beginning, the fear of insecurity was the presence of India on one side of the border and Soviet-occupied Afghanistan on the other. If the Soviets gained victory in Afghanistan then without any doubt that Soviets would invade Pakistan too. It feared "physical isolation" as put by Tanner (2003) that Zia was enthusiastic about supporting the Mujahidin because he was seen with criticism as he came to power through a coup and hung his predecessor, adding further to this U.S. was aware of Pakistan's secret nuclear weapon program and also his country was plagued by poverty and instability.

The Soviet invasion gave Zia the opportunity to prove himself in front of the West and Muslim community by helping jihadis even though it meant giving up the sovereignty of its territory of North West Frontier Province to the mujahidin for base camps. Zia Ul Haq gave support to the fundamentalist groups of Hikmatyar, Rabbani and tried to avoid the other secular nationalist groups that had emerged against the Marxist regime because he wanted religion to give him an advantage in politics; thus he ignored the other parties for his personal gains. Very soon the funds for helping Mujahidin started to flow from China who had a difference with both India and Soviets and provided arms for the fighters, from Egypt the arms were supplied and Saudi Arabia contributed with money, Iran too supported the Shia Hazaras who rose for the resistance against the Soviets. U.S. came to admire the Mujahidin for their direct fight against the Soviets and their nationalism for their country.

In 1980 President Carter gave assistance to the fighters in Afghanistan which amounted around $30m and Ronald Regan administration contributed $250m (Keling et al 2010) apart from arms supplies, Saudi Arabia also assisted financially in helping the Mujahidin. Initially financial help was provided but in the later stage when the Soviet Union deployed its hi-tech weaponry supplies, U.S. started to provide military equipment and weapons to give a blow back to the Soviets. By 1987 the Mujahidin was fiercely trained and equipped, the fighters fought with religious zeal to oust the Soviets thus saving Afghanistan from the "infidel" rule. The resources provided by the countries to Mujahidin like Pakistan, Iran, Egypt, Gulf States and U.S. gave an upper hand to Islamic fundamentalism to grow in Afghanistan which was economically

backward and deeply rooted in feudalism and had no source of funds to bring a change other than relying on foreign assistance.

The Coming of Taliban: The motivation for the Muslim foreign fighters to engage in the fight against the Soviet Union was the religious imperativeness. Taliban emerged to counter the anarchy that rose due to the Mujahidin leaders actions. Both were guided by the Islamic fundamentalism that was used to oust a foreign regime. Al-Qaeda was also born in the tumultuous Afghanistan, a product made in a violent war mongering society, its architect Bin Laden shared the same form of Islamic extremism along with his contemporaries who fought the Soviets but with a difference in the motive of carrying out a global Jihad.

Before Al- Qaeda was formed the preparation for the organization had started as early as 1989 the training camps were funded by Bin Laden when the fight against the Soviets started in Afghanistan. The need for opposing Western hegemony as an idea was created by the Muslims who met in the militant camps of Afghanistan (Shahzad 2011). The victory over the Soviet Union also gave a sense of confidence to the Muslim fighters who later joined Al- Qaeda to carry their war forward against the West.

Soon after the Soviets withdrew in 1989 from Afghanistan a vacuum was created and Najibullah took over the reins of the government. The war against the Soviet Union did not bring peace rather it brought destruction and civil war in the Afghan society that only prolonged the instability. Mujahidin and Najibullah's government engaged in a rivalry for power, not only there was a power struggle between Mujahidin and Najibullah there was rivalry inside Mujahidin which was centered on the ethnicity among the Afghan Mujahidin. Different factions rose under the leadership of those fighters who fought as Mujahidin. Najibullah government became very weak especially after the fall of Soviet Union and the confidence was lost, Najibullah himself escaped a coup in 1990 (but eventually murdered by the Taliban). After the withdrawal of the communist forces the Afghan army continued to struggle, the battle lasted between the army and the Mujahidin until Najibullah had to step down and the Mujahidin took over the Afghan government. But the hunger for power among the leaders of Mujahidin prolonged the instability and civil war and the infighting among different ranks plagued Mujahidin.

Civil war caught up with the division based on ethnic lines and each tried to get a hold of the government leading to escalated instability in Afghanistan. The refugees started to increase by day and the economic collapse gave rise to the trade of opium which benefitted the Mujahidin .It made Afghanistan the leader in producer and supplier of heroin throughout the world. During the turmoil Taliban appeared which from Southern Afghanistan, it came to punish the criminals under the guidance of a Mullah Mohammed Omar and his students (Tanner 2003: 279). Taliban ranks suddenly swelled by mostly the refugees which came through the support of Pakistani establishment. Taliban rose during the turmoil in Afghanistan to put an end to the ongoing anarchy and the selfish interests of Mujahiddin leaders. Taliban followed strict Islamic principles. Very soon its popularity increased with a mass support to end the anarchy that had fuelled the Afghan society and finally it took over the regions controlled by the leaders of Mujahidin.

Taliban mobilized militias in thousands and captured province after province until it took over Kabul. In the earlier stance when Taliban emerged initially, the West did not have any negative perceptions. By 2000-2001 Taliban consolidated its authority in Afghanistan. The relationship between Osama Bin Laden and Mullah Omar grew; though Laden had left for Sudan in 1990 he had already formed Al-Qaeda which was in its infancy when Taliban rose. The victory of Taliban in Afghanistan gave jihadist a moral boost, Bin Laden got the opportunity to take recruits from religious schools of Pakistan and Afghanistan for carrying out terrorist missions. Bin Laden helped Taliban in getting rid of the most formidable opponent i.e. Mousoud who had held a portion of territory from Taliban through an Al- Qaeda suicide bomber.

Radical Islam existed in Afghanistan prior to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan as Mishra (2002) points out that there were attempts to introduce several Islamic variants of Islam in the first quarter of 20th century. During the 1950s there was flourishing Islamic movement where the faculty of theology at Kabul University established links with Egypt Islamic Brotherhood and it so happened that Taliban followed the Deobandi school given the existing leaning towards fundamentalism in Afghan society. Taliban followed Deobandi school of Sunni Hanafi Islam; Deobandi rose in British India as a movement to unite the Muslims under the colonial rule. Deobandi encouraged a new generation of Muslims to be educated and revive Islamic values based on Sharia and intellectual pursuit, it opposed any form of hierarchy in the

Muslim community and rejected Shia sect. The Same form of Deobandi was preached to the refugees in Pakistani camps but with extremism, the religious ideological influence of Taliban came from extreme Deobandism.

The radical Islamisation of Afghanistan got a leash when CIA united the Muslims to fight against the Soviets. After the withdrawal of Soviet Union U.S. kept relations with the Mujahidin indirectly by supporting its allies Saudi Arabia and Pakistan in the region. By supporting Taliban U.S. intended to create anti-Shia anti- Iran movement which would help in undermining the role of Iran in the region. Control of oil resources was another factor that U.S. went without much opposing to Taliban regime (Akbar, 2015). Apart from keeping Iran at bay it wanted to secure the interest of UNOCAL oil Company and Saudi Delta Oil Company, together in collaboration they were carrying out the project of gas pipeline from central Asia to Pakistan and secured environment was necessary for the project which U.S. thought Taliban would act as a vanguard in protecting its oil interest. Pakistan as an ally was trusted by the U.S. in dealings with Taliban but the former had its own strategic gains in keeping amicable relations with Taliban to counter India on the Kashmir issue.

The majority of Taliban soldiers came from Baluchistan and NWFP refugee camps from Pakistan who learned whatever they could from the madrassas imbibed by education from Koran. As Rashid (2001) points out that they were the orphans of war, who were economically deprived with little self-knowledge who had seen war as the way of life in Afghanistan and the only occupation that they could adapt to because they had no other skills for doing a different job "These fighters lived in the confines of the brotherhood who believed in the subjugation of women which was a mark of a true believer" (Rashid 2001: 32), which is why Taliban followed severe restrictions on women and also differentiated them from the earlier Mujahidin. The victory of Taliban in gaining provinces made them believe that they were the invincible army of god and their interpretation of Islam was the only interpretation. Hence the growth of Islam Fundamentalism in Afghanistan got a support from states that had their vested interests.

The civil war that broke out in Afghanistan created division on ethnic lines and intolerance and Islamic sect dichotomy prevailed. The Hazaras (Shia) were murdered by Taliban which was not a common precedent by such incidents in the history of

Afghanistan. Bin Laden ideas of Islamic extremism was born in the training camps of Pakistan he had close proximity with Mullah Omar and supported Taliban for all its accomplishments in Afghanistan. Mullah Omar started to lose interest in the U.S. for obtaining recognition for his regime. Bin Laden became popular in Taliban ranks; he founded his training camps for Al Qaeda cadres near Khost region along Afghan-Pakistan border.

Reaction of U.S. to Mujahidin and Taliban

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan sent shudders in Washington, President Carter was positive about the anti-communist resistance and wanted to give support indirectly to the Mujahidin. The only way to avoid the invasion and not defeating Soviet Union was to opt for an option that was strategically viable by training the local tribal rebels and making them fight the war against the communists which would realistically serve the interests of both U.S. and the Afghan fighters i.e. the cutting off of communist infiltration in South Asia. The sophisticated training and weaponry given by the U.S. to the Mujahidin gave them tremendous powerful skills like guerrilla tactics and conventional attack to combat Soviet forces which were channeled through Pakistan ISI. U.S. didn't avoid the fundamentalist Mujahidin to grow in power.

 As Dilip Hiro (2002) points out that Zia Ul Haq's support for fundamentalist group to fight against the Soviet forces ran parallel with Brzezinski who sidelined the opinion of Cyrus Vance the then Secretary of State who was in favour of having the traditional Islamic groups to allay with nationalist secular groups and forge an alliance to fight the Soviets. Brzezinski made a view of exporting ideology of Islam nationalism to completely destroy the Soviet system and created Washington-Islamabad-Riyadh alliance with U.S. becoming the coordinator by supplying weapons through Pakistan. Thousands of foreign fighters were drawn in Afghanistan and each went through the training camps operated by ISI. After the death of Zia Ul Haq, the Mujahidin didn't become weak though there were chances of the breaking of factions but President George H. Bush supplied more arms almost matching to Saudi Arabia to the Afghan Mujahidin and the factions managed to stay under a single roof.

U.S. wanted UNOCAL the U.S. based oil company to have a stake in building the gas pipeline from central Asia to Pakistan. UNOCAL supported the Taliban through U.S. government who wanted to give humanitarian aid to the warlords if they promised to

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supervise the pipeline. After Kabul was captured by Taliban U.S. State Department announced establishing of "diplomatic relations with Taliban" (Rashid 2001: 166) and was not objectionable to the imposition of Sharia law by the Taliban. UNOCAL and U.S. government worked together to have a pipeline running through new territories and Taliban would secure interest for the U.S. by creating a Sunni held borders thus isolating Iran and breaking its monopoly on Central Asia trade routes and providing security for its trade routes and pipelines.

Pakistan supported UNOCAL and in return wanted U.S. to legitimize Taliban as soon as possible. Apart from securing the gas pipeline U.S. supported Taliban due to its anti-Iran anti-Shia outlook and thought it to be pro-west and didn't pay much attention to its Radical orientations. Only when domestic pressures grew at home by the feminists groups against the Taliban for the ill-treatment of Afghan women Clinton administration woke up to take a harder stance against Taliban. By 1998-99 Clinton started to put a tougher a stance on Taliban due to its unwilling position for endorsing UNOCAL project and in 1999 Bin Laden was discovered to be associated with Taliban only then it became clear that Taliban could not be an ally of U.S.

Birth of Al-Qaeda

The ideological formation of Al-Qaeda can be attributed to Abdullah Azzam a Palestinian- Jordanian who later came became an associate and mentor of Bin Laden. He had already built the foundations for Al-Qaeda in 1987with a different name of Maktab al Khidmat Lil Mujahidin al-Arab in Peshawar which actively trained the Mujahideen in Pakistan. Many radical youths from about 43 countries came to Afghanistan between 1982- 1992 to join the training camps in Pakistan out of which Osama Bin Laden headed non-Afghan jihadis against the Soviets.

Bin Laden belonged to a wealthy business family began financing several terrorist operations. His name was first picked by CIA while investigating for 1992 World trade center bombing. The impression that CIA had about Laden was mainly of a chief financier of Islamic extremism globally and was associated with many places. CIA had an entire unit to follow Bin Laden activities, the first chief of the unit Michael F. Scheuer expresses that by 1996 Bin Laden was not just a financier but a combination of "medieval theologian and 21st century CEO who could drive an organization to a particular goal" (McKenna 2013). Bin Laden after coming to Peshawar got closely

associated with Abdullah Azzam, and after his death in a car bomb incident in 1989 Bin Laden ran the institution under a new banner of Al Qaeda but with the greater ambition to have an international network of jihadis.

Al-Qaeda had a structured hierarchy which included a policy making Shura council with four executive committees of the military, business, fatwa and Islamic studies, media and public relations. He went back to Sudan leaving Afghanistan disgruntled by the enmities that existed within Afghan Mujahidin. Al Qaeda was a new name given to demised Azzam's Maktab al Khidmat organization which already had a military infrastructure. Under Bin Laden the area of operation moved outside Afghanistan and found foreign places ridden with regional conflicts like Mindanao, Tajikistan, Somalia, Malaysia, Uzbekistan, Indonesia, Georgia, Nagorno- Karabakh, Yemen, Algeria, Egypt, Azerbaijan (Gunaratna 2002), infiltration of Al Qaeda in these places gave them an opportunity to train and recruit more militants.

In Sudan Bin Laden mobilized more recruits for Al-Qaeda but he could not stay any longer there due to pressure by the U.S. on the Sudanese government to hand him over making him return to Afghanistan in 1996. After returning to Afghanistan Bin Laden opened his camps for training for Al-Qaeda recruits soon the camps grew under him and were funded by his own assets and donations from the oil-rich Gulf States, smuggling of heroin from Afghanistan. Many Islamic NGOs also funded Al Qaeda along with donations from mosques; its financial network was circulated through hawala transfers.

Osama Bin Laden was based in Peshawar since 1982 and had recruited many volunteers to join the fight against Soviets; prior to his involvement in Afghanistan, he did not have any history of involvement in Islamic Extremism. The empire that Bin Laden built for the jihadis could be traced back o 1980s the financial backing that helped Bin Laden to grow the networks all around the globe came with the help of U.S. CIA and many Gulf countries, the aid came from "Human Concern International Society" (FBIS Report, 2004) which was founded in Afghanistan in 1982 the assistance provided Bin Laden to have a strong militias which later turned against to its own provider.

Bin Laden didn't favor Saudi Monarch who started to consolidate power in 1932 and had an affiliation towards the West, the ill feeling towards Saudi Arabia grew when

U.S. troops were allowed to be stationed in the kingdom during the Iraq invasion of Kuwait and in the meantime animosity for America got exacerbated. In the Fatwa announced by Laden, he interprets U.S. involvement in and around the globe that undermined the Muslims when he says "Muslims' blood has become the cheapest blood and their money and wealth are plundered by the enemies" (Osama Bin Laden, 1996).

The organizational structure of Al- Qaeda differed widely from any of the known terrorist organizations, it built for itself an elaborate operational infrastructure which was shrouded in secrecy. Till the mid-1990s no government opposed its growth. As Gunaratna (2002)expresses that Al Qaeda is characterized by an ideology with a proper command and control structure. In 1998 it was reorganized with a pyramidal structure with the consultative council, global terrorist network, guerrilla force in Afghanistan, coalition of transnational terrorist organizations. Al-Qaeda had a capacity for regeneration with a diverse membership inclusive of all those who wanted to join the jihad. It was not a single group neither a coalition of groups but a conglomerate of Islamic parties and other terrorist groups with a core base in Afghanistan and satellite cells all around the globe. The leaders of the groups were included when necessary and acted as the high command which in turn was run by a vertical leadership structure providing a strategic guide to its cells and associated organizations world over.

Al-Qaeda main leader who acted as a channel for support from Pakistani network collapsed after 2002 and after the assault of Al Qaeda by U.S. in 2002 they regrouped themselves with much younger cadres, the fiefdoms controlled by the old tribal leaders fell into the hands of new generation of fighters who were fully committed to Al-Qaeda and their nature of their work now began encompassing international operations and attack Western interest in Pakistan. The future plans of Al-Qaeda now extended to a larger outlook by connecting with the Muslims globally for a worldwide resistance mostly after 2005 (Shahzad 2011).

Islamic extremism paved a way for a terrorist organization like Al-Qaeda to grow in a vast network all over the world which was unprecedented by any other terrorist group in the history of terrorism. Their ideology was based on puritanical foundations but they took full advantage of modern technology for achieving their aim. Just like any

other terrorist organization Al Qaeda also has a life span but it started a prolonged struggle against the West.

9/11

Prior to 9/11 attack, there were other attacks against Americans, the bombing of U.S. military base in Saudi Arabia in like1996 and bombing of U.S. embassies in Tanzania and Kenya in 1998. Bin Laden's intentions to attack America by declaring a fatwa on U.S. and the declaration of carrying out Islamic jihad against U.S. and Israel were clear indication of Al-Qaeda's motives of harming U.S. interests at home and abroad. Ramzi Yousef the perpetrator of World Trade Centre bombings of 1993 was associated with the financier Khaled Sheik Mohammad who was also behind 9/11 attacks. During his interrogation, he had revealed about building up of international Islamic network which had different nationalities only later it was known to be Al-Qaeda. These were the signs that U.S. missed in realizing the threat of a bigger attack which came in the form of 9/11.

Most of the anti-U.S. views were developed by Bin Laden due to its involvement in Gulf war as Madelsohn (2009) expresses after the Gulf War U.S. became the focal point of troubles in holy places which needed to be tackled, Bin Laden was opposed to Saudi royal family ruling the country whom he saw to be corrupted and had allowed American troops to station. He was dissatisfied with the foreign power like U.S. intervening in the problems faced by Islamic countries and engaging in military actions, he was critical of Arab rulers who supported U.S. government to gain benefits, and U.S. government supporting Israel for Palestinian issue, bombing of Iraq and application of sanctions which affected the people of Iraq (Miller 2009) the only solution to the problems perceived by Bin Laden was the collapse of U.S.

After 9/11 Bin Laden explains the reason behind the attack:

"The events that affected my soul in a direct way started in 1982 when America permitted the Israelis to invade Lebanon and the American Sixth Fleet helped them in that. This bombardment began and many were killed and injured and others were terrorized and displaced... And as I looked at those demolished towers in Lebanon, it entered my mind that we should punish the oppressor in kind and that we should destroy towers in America in order that they taste some of what we tasted and so that

they be deterred from killing our women and children. And that day, it was confirmed to me that oppression and the intentional killing of innocent women and children is a deliberate American policy. Destruction is freedom and democracy, while resistance is terrorism and intolerance... This is the message which I sought to communicate to you in word and deed, repeatedly, for years before September 11th....And you can read this, if you wish, in my interview with Scott in Time Magazine in 1996, or with Peter Arnett on CNN in 1997, or my meeting with John Weiner in 1998." (Laden 2004).

The above excerpt by Bin Laden tells that 9/11 was the retaliation for all the deaths that U.S. caused in Islamic countries those were unjustified and hence god guided him to attack the twin towers. The attack from Al-Qaeda came in 1998 American embassies bombings in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam killing 244 people and attack USS Cole in Yemen killing 17 soldiers (CNN 2011) and finally the blow came in U.S. on September 11, 2001. On the other hand, U.S. intervened due to the circumstances and for a noble purpose which became the prevailing narrative for "justifying and explaining its exercise for global power" (Bacevich, 2002). Huntington thesis seemed to be more relevant and popular among the public to describe the terrorist attacks proving the claims made by him that the future wars and cause for the conflict around the globe will be guided not by political ideology but by religious and cultural differences.

According to the 9/11 commission report (2004) terrorism Clinton Presidential directives made National Security Council to coordinate domestic and international counterterrorism efforts through Counterterrorism Security Group headed by Richard Clarke but did not have a clear idea about countering Al-Qaeda before 9/11 even though they had been following Bin Laden as early as 1993 it was only in 1997 that he was described as the financier of extremism by the CIA, which made him a known name in the U.S. administration. The word "terrorism" was absent from Bin Laden profile in 1996 statement brought by the state department which also did not mention his activities and aims outside the Middle East (Laquer 2003:122). In 1996 Bin Laden Unit was created to track the activities of Bin Laden in Afghanistan, even a plan was made for his capture but dropped in 1998. As Laquer has discussed that there were clear signs on the horizon when Khobar barracks were attacked in Saudi Arabia, the embassy bombings, and finally USS Cole warship in Aden, the prevention of 9/11 can be viewed as a failure of intelligence. The recruiting for new assets had many

limitations and hence was reduced to relying on second-hand information from other intelligence.

After the embassy bombings, Bin Laden whereabouts got more discreet and U.S. counterterrorism officials lost the communication links used by Laden for intercepting his conversations. In December1998 decision for killing Bin Laden by using cruise missiles in Afghanistan was taken but could not take place due to the collateral damage involved in the strike. Even though the counterterrorism measures were at work there were challenges faced by the intelligence community in dealing with Al-Qaeda as Benjamin and Simon (2003) has expressed that Al-Qaeda used different forms of communication which were untraceable and the group had no fixed infrastructure, communication intercepts played an important role in tracking its activities globally which could not be accomplished. The option for the military strategy was not seen as a viable option after what had been left of Afghanistan of years of warfare.

Clinton administration issued unilateral sanction on the Kandahar regime but this didn't make Taliban regime cooperative. After the attack the aim of Bush administration was to find the perpetrators, it was linked to state sponsors like Iraq, Iran, Libya, Sudan, Afghanistan for harbouring terrorism. A new threat was identified and Bush decided to destroy all those responsible for the attack and to fight international terrorist organizations in the Middle East. It was a new kind of war waged by the Bush administration against a new kind of enemy, with a strategy developed to eliminate Al-Qaeda and those states which supported terrorism. U.S. would channelize all its resources from military, financial, diplomatic, to intelligence in developing an overarching strategy to fight and destroy the new enemy.

Counterterrorism Policy under Bush and "War on Terror"

The first step immediately following the attack was to create a strategy towards Afghanistan and Pakistan in dismantling Al-Qaeda. According to the White House papers (2001), it stated the need for Taliban regime to end the support of Bin Laden and hand him over along with other deputies like Zawahiri, produce information about their future plan of attacks and possession of WMD, close their terrorist camps and expel all the terrorists from Afghanistan. In the case of noncompliance by Taliban then U.S. would use its efforts along with other states to expel Taliban by taking

military action from ground and air to destroy their infrastructure and capture Bin Laden. The National Security Strategy of 2002 became the framework for providing legislation to National Strategy for Combating Terrorism (NSCT) which included National Strategy for Homeland Security, Weapons of Mass Destruction, Secure Cyberspace, Physical Protection of critical Infrastructure and key Assets, National Drug Control Strategy, Maritime Security and also the blueprint for Bush Doctrine.

The immediate response was to punish, removal and resolve. The operation in Afghanistan led to the denial of sanctuary for Al-Qaeda through counterinsurgency and in later phase it included the targeted killings and drone strikes techniques. The pillars of counterterrorism policy had six broad dimensions according to Cronin (2014) those are punishment, denial of sanctuary, decapitation strikes, shoring up homeland security, capacity-building and countering extremism.

Democratic regime change became one of the main features of Bush policy to uproot terrorism. In 2001 Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld had garnered the thinking for supporting the opposition forces by providing intelligence, logistics, humanitarian supplies and equip and train the local opposition forces considered as the enemy of the "common enemy" in Middle East region instead of having direct aerial strikes on the people of Afghanistan which would stop the states from supporting and harbouring terrorism. The document also mentions "If the war does not significantly change the world's political map, the U.S. will not achieve its aim" (Secretary of Defence, 2001) he prescribes the change of regime in Afghanistan and another key state Iraq which supported terrorism.

The Bush policy contended that by changing the regime in Iraq the process of Democracy will follow throughout the Middle East through the program of "Middle East Initiative". It included promoting Democracy, bringing economic opportunities, and having a knowledge-based society in the region mostly aided by the G 8 members to bring change in the greater middle east region on these fronts. This initiative was not seen to be assertive enough to bring a change in the Middle East governments, without taking the question of Arab-Israeli peace process the Arab governments would not have taken the reform seriously (Carnegie Endowment 2004)

Following 9/11 the major policy surrounding foreign policy issues were that of a pre-emptive attack on Iraq which was needed for eradicating the threat and possible

presence or future possession of WMD. Pre-emption which is taking action due to imminent threat posed by mobilization of military, navy or air force for an attack , but in the case of terrorism, there are no visible signs of the plan of attack. The concept of imminent threat needed to be adapted to the capabilities of the adversary. The "Pre-emption war" was redefined as "Preventive war" as used by Holloway (2008), which meant apply of force against those states that may have a potential to create security threats against U.S. Mostly those states having the ability to possess WMD. Bush endorsed "preventive war" which was fought to avoid the likely emergence of threat even before it is formed. It allowed Bush to not only eradicate terrorism but also those rogue or failed states which had a possibility of accumulating WMD and could attack U.S. This led the U.S. intervention in Iraq to stop Saddam Hussein from carrying out any hostility.

Bush NSS moved away from the policy followed during cold war period of preserving the existing balance of power to an aggressive expansion of U.S. hegemonic interests in the key region of the world with the core of Bush policy exhorting neoconservative principles. Bush opted for building up of a new foreign policy and reinvention of national security strategy. The cold war strategy of pre-emption didn't seem to work for rogue states nor did realism of balance of power seemed relevant in a unipolar world dominated by a sole superpower; the answer was a preventive war which meant containing the threat which might materialize in the possible future.

Bush tried to eradicate global terrorist organizations by attacking the leadership, command-control, and communications, material support and finances. Apart from acting multilaterally for carrying out the action to defeat terrorist organizations unilateralism was also kept as a possible option if needed and supported moderate Muslim countries especially in fighting against global terrorism as stressed in NSS "while the U.S. will constantly strive to enlist the support of international community, we will not hesitate to act alone if necessary" (NSS 2002: 6). Operation "Enduring Freedom" was launched in October 2001 which was the world's first multilateral military mission to curb terrorism, but military force also has a limitation on curbing terrorism as shown by the case of Libya(Forest 2007:9).

Afghanistan: From October 2001 U.S. and coalition forces launched an offensive of aerial strike in Afghanistan against the Taliban leaders and Al –Qaeda. Hard power

capabilities were shown in Afghanistan against the Taliban and Al-Qaeda. It included deployment of massive air power combined with specialists on the ground and use of proxy troops for fighting to avoid the U.S. troops casualty. Taliban fell from Kandahar just after two months of U.S. air attack. U.S. ground troops came in after the fall of Taliban its installations, convoy, and Al- Qaeda training camps were bombarded. Captured Taliban leaders were taken as prisoners. The military focus shifted to Tora Bora where Bin Laden and his associate Zawahiri were supposed to be hiding.

After the offensive carried out by the U.S. and coalition forces the fall of Taliban in Kandahar led U.S. and other states to start with the reconstruction process in Afghanistan and Bonn Agreement was signed in December 2001. It aimed to establish an elected Democratic Afghan government and led to the creation of interim government headed by Hamid Karzai which was to be followed by a Democratic process by having an elected government eventually . It also provided security in the region by drawing forces from NATO members and International Security Assistance Force.

Controversy arose regarding Bush decision to reject Geneva Convention in the treatment of the detainees from Afghanistan. The fighters were drawn from Afghan tribes from east Afghanistan to capture Bin Laden but that did not prove to be fruitful. Loss of civilian lives was costly with many strike errors on convoys mistakenly killing the civilians. By 2002 the attacks in Afghanistan didn't help in finding Bin Laden. The major development occurred after the toppling of Taliban regime which allowed previous mujahideen leaders and tribal lords to reclaim the regions from Taliban. Very soon there was a resurgence of Taliban, though they fell from Kandahar they moved to Afghan-Pakistan border.

Al Qaeda migrated to Pakistani tribal areas and operated camps smaller in size to avoid the surveillances and carried out their indoctrination campaign from Pakistan's tribal areas. However, Al-Qaeda made sure that Taliban would survive the U.S. assaults and would return to Afghanistan with a new strategy and restructured command system. Taliban resurgence in 2006 proved it to be alarming for the western coalition. The internal situation in Afghanistan got worse due to the emergence of insurgency sustained by Taliban, Haqqani network, local militias, Hizb-i-Islami, foreign fighters to oust the Afghan government.

The insurgency started in 2002 even when the political progress had taken place, as Afghanistan had a decentralized political structure with areas controlled by different tribes, the Afghan government didn't have the monopoly on the use of force and neither had a formal justice system. Pakistan provided sanctuary for the insurgents groups which it had done so even in the past, their support after Operation Enduring Freedom led to the rise in insurgency. There was no strong army system in Afghanistan, and the forces were poorly trained and equipped having allegiance to local warlords and military commanders but not to a central state. After Mullah Omar came to power the military Shura was under him and he decided on key military strategies with Taliban commanders recruiting men. The Taliban military structure also included Al-Qaeda and several Pakistani members like the Brigade 055 included Pakistani, Sudanese and other foreign fighters (RAND 2008: 35). Given such a background of Afghanistan, the insurgency came to the fore as early as 2002 and got engaged in asymmetric tactics against U.S. coalition forces, the violence from insurgency became acute between 2005-2006.

U.S. Counterinsurgency efforts involved a full range of operations and not only military offensive operations but also tried to address the societal root of the problem of host nation by taking the reconstruction projects and engaging in nation building efforts. The Counterinsurgency efforts in Afghanistan not only involved military attacks of insurgents but also included by building the capacity of the Afghan people. U.S. aimed for creation of an indigenous government by including the representative from the tribal and ethnic groups. Another goal was to have a small military footprint in Afghanistan, U.S. avoided invading Afghanistan with a large number of troops, hence a small number of ground troops and air power was thought to be good enough for maintaining the security. But this created a problem in facing the insurgents as there was not enough forces and lack of properly trained Afghan police and military also became a hindrance in controlling the insurgents.

The U.S. military used "clear, hold, and expand" strategy while eliminating the insurgents which was achieved by destroying the insurgents and their organization in a particular area for a long period of time, this strategy of U.S. COIN became one of the most successful elements in Afghanistan. Another important aspect of COIN was

civil-military programs like provincial reconstruction teams consisting of soldiers, U.S. government officials, USAID and other U.S. State departments which became a key in strengthening the central government and providing projects and funds for civilian projects.

Iraq: Bush gave a speech in 2003 condemning Saddam Hussein's intention of hiding WMD and harboring terrorists including Al Qaeda outfits which posed a threat to U.S. It gave the authority to use force against Iraq for harnessing such intentions which might have been detrimental to the national security. Bush announced of taking military action in Iraq and depose the dictator Saddam Hussein and promised to build a new Iraq free from tyrants and terrorists (Bush 2003).

The internal security of Iraq suffered as a result of U.S. attacks starting from 2003 with major combat operations, with the death of Saddam's sons there was an increase in insurgency activity. The number of insurgents formed in Iraq was loyalists from Saddam regime, military personnel was disbanded by U.S. later they joined the insurgency to fight U.S. led coalition. The prisoners from Iraqi jail (Chandler and Gunaratna 2007) who joined together to carry out an insurgency against U.S. and the newly formed Iraqi government. Free from authoritarian regime it became easier for those elements to come out and engage in terrorist activities as pointed by Chandler and Gunaratna (2007: 54). Foreign fighters poured in Iraq although they were in a small number but influential one as they engaged in kidnappings, the assassination of government officials, suicide bombings.

When the invasion happened the insurgency was dominated by indigenous elements but as the conflict escalated the situation got more complex with Islamic extremism coming out in the open. U.S. officials termed Iraq to be a "magnet of jihadis". But the invasion of Iraq created an atmosphere conducive for extremism to thrive. It reversed the aim of Bush policy which was to remove jihadi elements but it led to the insurgency with escalating sectarian violence in Iraq. Starting from 2003 to 2006 loss of civilian lives rose to approximately 70000 (Iraq body count 2012). The destruction in Iraq was massive and proved to be futile especially when no proof of WMD was found in Iraq. The modern day COIN strategy gained prominence when General Petraeus and his army officials wrote Field Manual-3-24 of 2006. The situation in

Iraq was deteriorating and there was a likelihood of civil war with violence escalating between the insurgents.

Bush announced in January 2007 to avoid the strategic defeat the deployment of 'surge' which was an increase in military troops needed in Iraq to curb the insurgency and terrorism problem. He announced General Petraeus to take over the charge of implementing COIN strategy in Iraq (Reynolds 2007). The increase in troops also indicated the need to stabilize the situation in Iraq before Bush left the office. By announcing a revised COIN strategy he thought that the violence in Iraq will subside and reconstruction and nation building will be successful. COIN emphasized on building a relationship with the local population and was aimed to be a long-term exit strategy where U.S. could leave the host nation by placing a friendly government in Baghdad. The insurgency mired Iraq into a protracted conflict that had since lasted from 2003 creating a new space for sectarianism and potential of putting the country into a civil war.

Effectiveness of "War on Terror"

The effectiveness of counterterrorism as measured from a political perspective is to determine the short-term progress of military and non- military operations in the region. In an explanation given by Kaukas (2013) that such operations can be maintaining security, providing humanitarian aid in the conflict zone but such goals are short term usually assessed by measuring the number of lives saved or lost, whether aid is provided or not, if stability is achieved or not. But assessing long-term impact is a complicated process like measuring the Behavioral and attitude changes of the people in the conflict countries. Such changes occur over a longer period which is usually difficult to determine. Mostly the armed forces and the governments rely on the early success to get the legitimacy from other states and actors and fail to assess the impact of the policies for the long term.

After 9/11, the counterterrorism policy of U.S. got a new strategy and it was defined by Bush policy with proactive and coercive measures. Thousands of Al-Qaeda militants were killed by aerial bombing in first few months of attack by U.S. in Afghanistan. When Bin Laden planned for 9/11 he never thought that U.S. would retaliate by deploying ground troops in Afghanistan. Around 3000 Al Qaeda (Shahzad 2011) members were killed in two months of U.S. invasion of Afghanistan. Several

leaders were killed and Al Qaeda retreated to Pakistan. As Gunaratna (2002) have pointed out that Bin Laden wanted to keep U.S. engaged in a protracted battle but it lost its base in Afghanistan to operate. After the relocation, it used associate groups to carry out new operations and it didn't need a central command to operate, its regional bureau acted as the nodal point which had links with associate groups of Al Qaeda cells. The disruption of its command and communication structure in 2001 didn't affect the organization largely due to its decentralized nature. Although the heavy bombing in Afghanistan affected the infrastructure of Al-Qaeda it was not ideologically harmed due to its strong base, built not only militarily but also its adherence to theoretical models of internationalism, with a strict follow of cell structure with tight discipline and the psychological assertion of self-sacrifice and reverence for the leadership.

The COIN strategy in Iraq and Afghanistan didn't create a strategic victory for U.S. which could be measured in terms of costs incurred in the two wars and lives lost. The data showed (Dao and Leheren 2012) that one thousand U.S. army personnel were killed in first nine years of war in Afghanistan and after the implementation of COIN that same figure was reached within two years. In Iraq from 2003-2011 the invasion cost lives of two lakh fifty thousand Iraqis and displaced one million. U.S. spent three trillion Dollars in its nation building efforts. Eventually, the country drifted into civil war and still continuing as of 2016.

The COIN strategy could not prevent the insurgency movement and intercept from escalating into a civil war, which basically meant the failure of the primary objective of COIN in containing the insurgency. As one of the commentators have written that U.S. COIN is synonymous with armed nation building. U.S. can place its army in any region where there is insurgency and COIN doctrine can defeat the insurgents by providing the host population with several assets like good governance, security force, improved economy, and infrastructure. By creating such conditions the local population will not support the insurgents and thus isolating the insurgents from the population which makes it easier to kill and capture them.

By invading Iraq and removing Saddam Hussein U.S. placed another dictator Nouri al-Maliki who had close ties with U.S. enemy Iran (Gentile 2013). Gentile also points out that one of the reasons for the decline in violence in 2007 were due to several

reasons like Anbar Awakening, Shia militants decision to stop attacking Sunnis, siding of Sunni militias with U.S. who chose to fight Al-Qaeda in Iraq and not necessarily by COIN strategy. The U.S. led coalition didn't give much chance to Pakistani diplomacy to create a wedge between Taliban and Al-Qaeda which the latter had joined with the former immediately after 9/11 ad thus preventing Taliban- Al-Qaeda alliance which Pakistan helped in doing so by becoming a partner with the West to disrupt Al-Qaeda forces.

After the U.S. invasion Al-Qaeda disappeared from Afghanistan but in 2006 Taliban reemerged in Afghanistan. Al Qaeda was spread in Pakistan and was able to expand its operations beyond Afghanistan this time. Taliban regrouped in Pakistani tribal areas assisted by Al-Qaeda got trained in the secluded mini bases for the spring offensive to come in 2006 against the western coalition. Al- Qaeda played its cards well by revitalizing Taliban for its comeback in Afghanistan. Instead of provoking Karzai government with an uprising Al-Qaeda and Taliban central command waited for the offensive to put a severe blow on U.S. and coalition forces in Southwest Afghanistan and adjoining Pakistani tribal areas paving the way for their dominance in the region.

The occupation of Iraq harmed U.S. interests and got criticism from home and Muslim countries and from Western societies when WMD was not discovered. The primary goal of reducing terrorism could not be succeeded by Bush policies as Patterns of Global Terrorism Report showed that terrorism increased by 300% due to the invasion of Iraq. After 9/11 the sentiment of the people worldwide was with U.S. decision to invade Afghanistan because of extremist Islamic terrorist residing in the region but the consequence of the intervention in Iraq made Al-Qaeda disperse from Afghanistan and Pakistan to other conflict and unstable regions. The jihadi groups in Africa, Middle East, and Asia assisted and started to work with Al-Qaeda who shared the vision of global Jihad and harming the western interest became their major interest. The occupation of Iraq spurned a new open conflict between the two sects Sunni and Shias in the Muslim world which was synergised by terrorism and opening up new fronts for Sectarian Extremism in Iraq.

Chapter 4

Rise of ISIS: Causes and Consequences

What is ISIS?

ISIS is an Islamic terrorist organization which follows Salafi interpretation of Islam belonging to Wahabi Sunni tradition. It is the extension of global Islamic jihadist movement seeking to establish an Islamic caliphate which is governed by the political and religious successor of Prophet Mohammad. It aims at erasing colonial imposition of borders that created a boundary between the Muslim states in Middle Easter. It believes in the annihilation of non-believers and apostates and those who opposes its doctrine. ISIS is the face of "new terrorism" which has beliefs in destruction to be an end in itself, having an eschatological worldview with methods based on terror and barbarity.

The name of the group has been changing since its inception, the main ideology of the group has remained unchanged only it grew in power over the years. The group was known as Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) in 2006, it was only in 2013 ISIS or ISIL (the last letter stands for Levant in the acronym which indicates eastern Mediterranean area of Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Jordan) prevailed with their with their capturing of territories in Syria, and after establishing the Islamic caliphate in 2014 the group declared itself just as IS. Sometimes this terrorist group is also known by the name of Daesh which is the derogatory Arabic Acronym for Islamic State of Iraq and Greater Syria (al-Dawla al-Eslamiyya al-Iraq al-Sham).

The creation of Islamic State in Iraq (ISI) now not only meant freeing Iraq from foreign occupation, it meant carrying forward the holy war on a global scale. It has a well-structured hierarchy with decision-making body. It is divided into Shura council, the Military council and Intelligence council with the main leader Baghdadi directly supervising them. Islamic Caliphate (IS) is supposed to be borderless, ideally encompassing all the Islamic states. It demands submission from the Muslim all over the world to their new caliph who is Baghdadi at present. The violators are to be punished with the death penalty and its ultimate goal is world domination by accomplishing the establishment of one ruler of the Islamic caliphate.

ISIS resorts to criminal activity for the logistical support in carrying out its battles. Most of the finance comes from smuggling oil to nearby regions, through extortion, taxation, selling of antiques. Its revenue increased from $1million per month in 2008 to $3million per day by 2014 (Swanson 2015). Apart from this, it got a boost in recruiting fighters by releasing the prisoners and acquiring military equipment from the Iraqi army. It resorts to heinous acts of violence and torture against its enemies and against its own people over whom it rules.

Genesis of ISIS

ISIS traces its origin to Al-Qaeda in the organizational sense and was nurtured by Zarqawi in the ideological sense. The role of Al-Qaeda became fundamental in providing Zarqawi a platform to practice his doctrine which later became the central ideology of ISIS. In this section, the ideological influence of Zarqawi will be discussed which made his organization stand apart from the other radical organizations including Al-Qaeda from which it emerged from and later transforming itself into a separate entity. Zarqawi's beliefs and methods were followed by his followers which eventually led to the formation of ISIS. Generally, Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI)and ISIS has been seen to be one and the same but the differences had that existed between the leaders were inherent even though they represented the same organization. The leadership of Zarqawi and AQI was vital in the creation of ISIS as we understand it today.

Zarqawi as the Founding Father of ISIS:

Abu Musab al-Zarqawi was a Jordanian jihadist, he joined the anti- Soviet campaign in Afghanistan and ran a militant camp but did not join Al-Qaeda then. He got seed funding from Al-Qaeda for his training camp in Afghanistan and owed an allegiance to Bin Laden later in 2004. After the invasion of Afghanistan, he fled to Iran in 2002 before the onset of the Iraq war. He based himself in Iraq Kurdistan and formed a militant organization known as Jamat'at-al Tawahid wal-Jihad (Group of Monotheism and Jihad) formed in late 2003. Zawahiri conducted several attacks in Iraq like the bombing of the Jordinian embassy in 2003, attacks on UN headquarters in Baghdad, the bombing of Iman Ali Mosque (Shapiro 2013). He engaged in gruesome killings and beheadings which were captured in videotape (Goldstein 2004). His popularity

grew as a leader in Iraq and Al-Qaeda wanted to pitch him in networking connections in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine which had lesser followers (Byman 2015).

Al-Qaeda made Zarqawi carry their operations in Iraq. He paid allegiance to Bin Laden in 2004 and transitioned his group al- Tawahid to AQI. Zarqawi unleashed terror in Iraq with mass executions, beheadings, sectarian violence with the aim of defeating U.S. and establishing an Islamic caliphate. Zarqawi showed ruthlessness and unrelenting violence against his enemies, he was determined to destroy the coalition forces and exhibited ferocity in conducting terror attacks not only against his enemies but also Iraqi children and women. He had no regards for the loss of lives and collateral damage while carrying out the attacks, that didn't seem to impact his conscience. His fanatical vision of the world was so deep that he not only considered Christians and Jews as his enemies but also Shias and secular Sunnis. The synthesis of Zarqawi and AQI created a destabilizing force in Iraq which unleashed terror in removing U.S. and coalition forces with the ultimate aim of the creation of Islamic caliphate.

There was difference of perspectives between Bin Laden and Zarqawi which later surfaced after years when Al-Qaeda cut off its relations with ISIS. Both believed in jihad but there were inherent differences in their line of thought which created a wedge between the two. Zarqawi shared the view of jihad with Bin Laden but differed in the goals of attaining it. Zarqawi had a regional view of jihad but Bin Laden focused on jihad on a global scale evident by his proclamation of fatwas against U.S. (McQuagge 2015). Zarqawi believed that the Iraqi Sunnis would come under AQI if they were radicalized enough, which could be possible by provoking the Shia and creating a sectarian war. The backlash by Shia would sufficiently awaken Sunni to protect themselves by attacking the Shias. As Shapiro (2013) expresses that the logic given by Zarqawi is a variant form of the terrorism as "awakening the masses" similar to the logic used by the Marxist in Russia in the 1900s and the leftist in South America in 1970s by provoking the state to commit atrocities and exposing its nature. But the difference here is that AQI wanted to provoke not the state but the Shia militants associated with the state.

There was a difference of opinion regarding Saudi Arabia between Bin Laden and Zarqawi, Bin laden detested the Saudi regime for its affiliation with U.S. but Zarqawi

detested Saudi for being an apostate. The disagreement was regarding carrying out the jihad against the "near enemy" or the "far enemy". The divergent understanding of jihad created a difference in opinion between Zarqawi and Bin Laden. Bin Laden gave priority to attack U.S. because it supported Islamic states with weapons, money and overall legitimacy, to gain political power making them the apostates. For this reason, Bin Laden chose to attack the "far enemy", whereas Zarqawi saw the apostate influence in the Islamic world politically and culturally as a negative influence in the Islamic world and the role of U.S. in supporting such states was viewed at a different issue. Both Bin Laden and Zarqawi believed in Salafi- Jihadism with the ultimate aim of establishing a caliphate their operational differences created a divide between Al-Qaeda core and AQI which led to their breaking up of ties.

The difference between Zarqawi and Bin Laden persisted throughout till Zarqawi's death in 2006. As Fishman (2006) points out that both the leaders had set aside their differences during the invasion period though they continued to have ideological differences. He says that there was a convergence of operations in Iraq for both the parties and for that reason the tension was not brought up in the open. Zarqawi opted certain tactics shaped by his ideological underpinnings which were different when he was in Afghanistan, at the same time Bin Laden needed a support to attack U.S. But the invasion of Iraq blurred such an operational differences and attack on U.S. forces and Iraqi police meant giving a blow to both apostate government and U.S. which served the aims of both Bin Laden and Zarqawi. In such a scenario paying allegiance to Bin Laden would have been a strategic move to give recognition to Zarqawi organization which would have provided him with financial support. As suggested by one of commentator that there has been no evidence on Zarqawi attacking Shia before the Iraq insurgency and Bin Laden also avoided anti-Shia propaganda even though it seems to have existed in Saudi Arabia and among Salafi jihadist. Al-Qaeda did not create a sectarian difference in the Islamic world as much as Zarqawi did.

 A spokesman of AQI mentions about Shia by saying "Reject rule by Shia they have betrayed Islam by letting U.S. into their land just like by letting tartars against the Muslims which became the cause of overthrow of Abbasid Caliphate in 1258 CE, Muslims must continue to strive till Islam is the sole religion in the world" (Hafeez 2007). Bin Laden accepted Shia militant organization like Hezbollah and had links with it to learn skills like mastering the technique of bombing buildings and always

insisted on Islamic groups to overcome their sectarian differences and unite together to fight against the West. Zarqawi tried to maintain group cohesion rather than maintain a mass appeal, he himself being an outsider in Iraqi society believed in having a strong internal cohesion. Zarqawi formulated a plan to drag Shia into a sectarian violence. Fishman (2006) points out that Zarqawi used his identity to explain the disadvantaged political condition of the jihadist and their isolation and criticism showed their righteous path. This identity was cultivated by Zarqawi in his organization to shun the disillusionment and discouragement due to which AQI became a strong organization.

Al-Qaeda in Iraq as the Predecessor Organization of ISIS:

AQI was mostly composed of Arab Sunnis, foreign fighters also joined the group and carried out the job of suicide bombers. AQI targeted moderate Sunni other nationalist insurgency groups and U.S. coalition forces. Other than AQI there were groups like Sunni insurgency groups, Shia militia, and organized criminals operating in Iraq. All of these groups engaged in internal rivalry but all of them commonly opposed the presence of U.S. forces in Iraq. AQI was criticized by the Iraqi tribal Sunnis due to its adherence to aggressive ideology and its penchant for violence and could not garner support from the population. Most of the civilian deaths occurred due to sectarian violence between the Sunni and Shia sects.

U.S. conducted 'surge' that made AQI loose its ground. In 2005 Sunnis from Albu Mahal tribe created 'Hamza Brigade" (Shapiro 2013), the fighting between this outfit and AQI persisted in places like al-Qaim, Anbar, and Ramadi. Anbar People Council was created by the tribes to fight against AQI mostly from Fahad tribe, the 1920s Brigade which was a Sunni guerrilla faction who detested AQI hard violence and its control of revenues through banditry and smuggling which had been controlled by the tribes (Long 2008). AQI carried out assignations of the tribal leaders opposed to it, especially after the tribes aligned with the coalition forces to attack AQI, the clash between AQI and Sunni tribes escalated (Tavernise and Filkins 2006). This clash came to be known as "Anbar Awakening" where the Sunnis rose to fight against AQI, in close co-operation with U.S. coalition forces. The alienation of AQI from the tribes in Anbar province led to the use of phrase "Day of Awakening" with a meeting held by the tribes on September 17, 2006. Since then "Anbar Awakening" has been synonymous with Sunni nationalist militant aligning with U.S. to fight AQI.

AQI tried to get associated with other militant groups due to the opposition from various nationalist insurgent groups. To counter this, AQI formed Mujahideen Shura Council consisting of several other smaller groups. The new government in Iraq could not be effective in curtailing the worsening situation. The sectarian war created infighting and corruption in the newly formed government of Iraq. U.S. had to pay greater attention in counterinsurgency rather than helping in nation-building efforts due to the escalation of violence after the formation of new government. In the midst of the situation, U.S. conducted airstrikes resulting in the death of Zarqawi in 2006.

AQI indulged in gruesome tactics to create fear among people like breaking fingers of cigarette smokers and killing of women who refused to wear a niqab. These methods created awe and shock that led to its unpopularity. Al Qaeda leaders warned Zarqawi about the evil methods deployed by him on its people. Al Qaeda relationship with Zarqawi was more of a strategic convenience. By linking with Zarqawi Al Qaeda wanted to remain relevant at the time when its core members were dispersed and on the run. AQI wanted to enhance the popularity and maintain its importance by collecting recruits of Al-Qaeda. The relationship between the two showed its weaknesses when Zarqawi did not follow the instructions of Al-Qaeda to stop attacks against the Shias because it was not a part of the agenda for Al-Qaeda version of jihad. AQI aim was to attack the U.S. forces but made a little attempt outside Iraq, thus deviating from the global agenda of core Al-Qaeda. AQI gained prominence under Zarqawi but for reasons that were not approved by Al-Qaeda. The anti-Shia outlook of AQI and encouragement of sectarian war was not a part of Al-Qaeda jihadist narrative. AQI actions harmed Al-Qaeda image in the eyes of its supporters, clerics who sympathized with Al-Qaeda for its struggle against U.S. occupation denounced Bin Laden. This led to a decrease in funding and recruitment support.

After the death of Zarqawi AQI was named as Islamic State of Iraq under the leadership of Abu Omar al Baghdadi (not to be confused with Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi who came later) but still maintained relations with Al-Qaeda. In October 2006 AQI joined with other jihadi groups to form the Islamic State of Iraq. Baghdadi was a jihadist operating in Iraq in 2004 against the U.S. coalition forces. After the death of Zarqawi, Baghdadi took control of the forces in Western Iraq, he was considered as the Emir of Islamic State of Iraq until his death in 2010 (Asharq al- Awsat 2010). In

2010 Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi became the leader of ISI when the jihadi movement began moving towards Syria

Factors Leading to Rise of ISIS

Salafi Jihadism:

Radical Islam existed centuries ago but the modern day jihad got a revival with Afghani jihad. The Gulf War of 1991 allowed jihadism to flourish as an ideology globally. The Islamic jihad coincided with U.S. involvement in Muslim states like Saudi Arabia and its presence of troops in the Islamic holy places. This increased the resentment for the Arab governments by the jihadist who fought in Afghanistan and they successfully exported the Afghani jihad when they returned home. The Israeli peace process created disillusionment in the Arab world, and after the Gulf war, Kuwait expelled Palestinians due to the alignment of PLO Yasser Arafat with Saddam Hussein. The Palestinians who fled Kuwait were mostly Jordan citizens one of them being Zarqawi. The returning Palestinians brought Jihadist Salafist ideology. Many ideologues like Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi who became the most famous modern jihad ideologue and also an advisor for Zarqawi in Iraq. Another was Abu Anas al – Shami, their preaching of modern day jihadi clerics influenced the Muslims who carried out attacks in Saudi Arabia in 1995 and 9/11.

The ideology of Al-Qaeda has been associated with that of Salafism. They embrace the earliest form of Islam with strict adherence to its literal and puritanical interpretation. The present day Salafist wants to return to the authentic version of Islam. It rejects any other form of interpretation or adaptation that Islam got associated with in later stages like mysticism and spiritualism. It believes in a narrow interpretation of Quran and the teachings of Prophet Mohammed and avoids the amalgamation of foreign ideas like western concepts and ideals. Salafism intends to remove the impurities that Islam inherited over the centuries of religious ignorance. But all the followers of Salafi school are not jihadist many of the Salafi religious leader do not support Al-Qaeda and the violence propagated by them (Byman 2015). Under Salafism, the Wahabi school of thought was born in eighteenth-century Central Arabia. This particular school is associated with the anti-Shia stance. They denounce the Shias and the Wahabi movement led to the destruction of Shia shrines and massacre of the Shias.

The belief systems of the jihadist organization leaders from Bin Laden to Zarqawi to Baghdadi fall under Salafi Islam. They believe in reviving Islam with the goal of creating an Islamic state and clearing out of the boundaries and borders marked between Islamic countries. It aims at restoring the pure form of Islam and legitimize the use of violent jihad to destroy any obstruction in attaining its goal. For such a reason the idea of global jihad prescribes the defeat and destruction of West and non-believers. The Salafi jihadist believed in overthrowing of apostates like Jordan and Saudi Arabia. They want to establish a strategic base in the heart of the Arab world, to replace for what they lost in Afghanistan, and having a base in Iraq would provide them with a strategic depth with the geographical borders of several states surrounding it like Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Syria, Jordan, Kuwait, and Iran. Among these states, four of which are an alley of U.S. one Shia dominated Iran and Syria with a secular Baathist regime. Acquiring a base in Iraq was a major achievement for jihadist. Iraq for the jihadist is the Islamic ummah and borders between the Muslim are not recognized by them.

The U.S. led invasion of Iraq is the mirror of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan which occurred two decades earlier. The invasion attracted fighters from all around the globe to fight and liberate Afghanistan and Islam. The invasion also gave a chance for training and gaining new skills as a preparation for a bigger jihad to overthrow the corrupted and secular regimes in the Islamic world. The Salafi jihadist emerged around Kurdish Iraqi group called Ansar al Islam (AI) initially opposed to Saddam Hussein having ideological backings from Al-Qaeda. But it was replaced by other groups due to the destruction of AI by the U.S. aerial attacks and Peshmerga militia ground attacks in 2003. The groups that emerged include ASG, the Victorious Sect, Ahl al Sunnah wal Jamaaharmy, Conquest Army. Many observers made a point that Salafism developed in Iraq during the 1990s in response to the major military defeat and social crises that gripped the country during that decade. The differentiation between AQI, ASG and other nationalist insurgents were that they differed in ideological emphasis and strategic orientation. They shared the same aim of resisting the U.S. occupation but the Islamic and nationalist group viewed the war as an defensive imposed by the U.S. with the motive of marginalizing the Sunnis by exporting power to Shia backed by Iran and Kurdish parties supported by U.S. These groups didn't perceive the Sunni-Shia schisms as the reason for Iraqi disintegration but

rather a division used by the U.S. to divide the Iraqi society and conquering it. The Salafi jihadist not only believed in ousting U.S. and coalition forces from Iraq but to establish a caliphate based on the teachings of Prophet Mohammed.

The leaders of the present day jihadist organization have been influenced by several modern day Islamic writers and thinkers. Like Sayyid Qutb who was the activist in Muslim Brotherhood who tremendously influenced the thinking of Islamist group all over the world with his ideas on western culture, imperialism, justice and political activism. He preached how Muslim countries chose materialism over Islam and the true Muslim should take up arms to stop such a state from gaining strength. Abu Muhammad al- Maqdisi is another living thinker who advocates the formation of a true Islamic state to unify its believers. Zarqawi was influenced by Maqdisi profoundly but the latter rejected the brutality pursued by Zarqawi against the fellow Muslims. Many other thinkers have influenced the jihadist cause but no matter how the ideas of the Islamic thinkers have influenced the jihadists, they have committed many form of brutality and murders to justify their actions.

Role of U.S. in Iraq:

The invasion of Iraq by U.S. did not resolve the situation of lessening the threat of terrorism in Iraq. The invasion created a feeling of hatred for U.S. in the Muslim world which allowed supporting of the resistance against U.S. by the same people who had previously condemned 9/11 attacks. After Saddam Hussein's regime got toppled the insurgency situation could not be curtailed by U.S. His fall led to the emergence of several groups aiming for political power in Iraq. U.S. favored the opposition of Saddam party mostly Shias and the Kurds which did not have a popular support previously. Iraqi Governing Council was set up in 2003 to look after the question of representation in the government which was based on sectarian lines. The members of the council were taken based on different sects i.e. Sunni, Shias, Kurds, Turkmen rather than being an Iraqi. Even the Communist party was chosen on sectarian lines rather than on secular grounds. The occupation by U.S. changed the power structures in Iraq, the oppressed sects not only under Saddam but subjugated for generations got a place of authority in the government. This drove the Sunnis to resist the occupation and attracted foreign fighters to enter Iraq by driving some radical Sunnis in joining the jihad. Bush initially thought that by allowing Shias to gain status in the political

arena would lead to the reformation of the Arab world by making them secular in the long run facilitating greater acceptance of U.S. and avoiding radicalism aimed at destroying America.

Paul Bremer a U.S. diplomat who headed Coalition Provisional Authority made an arrangement for power sharing based on a quota system for the various sects in Iraq. Which gave maximum representation to the Shias and they used it as a ladder to gain maximum power. Saddam's regime did not recognize itself to be the representative of Sunnis but rather a secularist (Ibrahim 2014) with Arab Sunnis getting the most favors from the dictator. Most of the officials in Bush administration condemned Saddam Baath Party and occasionally compared it with Hitler's Nazi party.

Paul Bremer and pentagon officials like Paul Wolfowitz, Dough Feith decided to disband the Iraqi army and around three hundred thousand of the ex-members of Baathist party were removed from governmental institutions. U.S. did not want Saddam's party members to have any control of political power nor have any other elite position (Childress et al 2014). In the process what it has come to be known as "de- Ba'athification" an order to expel the Sunni from their profession which contributed for the motivation for joining the insurgency. The U.S. prioritized in expelling the senior ranks of Baath party members from their jobs when Iraq was being torn by the insurgency.

The De Ba'athification drove around fifty thousand Baathist to go underground overnight according to a CIA estimate (Dodge 2016). The corruption did not allow the reconstruction project to start immediately. Out of the forty billion dollars sanctioned for the nation building project of Iraq, only ten billion was used (Gwynne 2015).The process of ousting the members of Baath party from their profession, ranging from ministries to university and hospitals, to government corporations led to unemployment. The unemployment prevailed and the economy came to a standstill in Iraq affecting millions of Iraqi to be despaired. The decision to delay the elections to make Iraq pro free market and secular took some years, and in the meantime insurgency got its way.

Rosen (2014) views the occupation of Iraq was meant to undo the Arab identity that Iraqis inherited. U.S. had the motive of creating regional autonomy and federalism over centralized and state-sponsored identity in Iraq. The undoing of Arab identity

would lead to adapting to primordial forms of identity which did not mean less damaging or free of violence. The occupation of Iraq created various view regarding the identity of Iraq which was described as multicultural, tribal society, and a collection of sects. The sectarian divide and electoral policies cemented this vision and U.S. helped in isolating Sunnis in Iraq. Some viewed that the Sunni-Shia conflict has existed since ages, and Iraqis were making an effort to fit in the political environment created by the U.S. Saddam's regime was discriminatory towards Shias, especially after the Gulf war Shias were not given jobs in the higher position, and power got concentrated more into the hands of Sunni. Saddam was hostile towards Shia, for instance, he prohibited the public practice of Shiism and banned Shiite religious books. The sectarian differences existed before the invasion of Iraq, but the tension between Shia and Sunnis emerged sharply after the invasion.

U.S. learned that there was lessening in violence related deaths in Iraq after the Surge and it decided to pull out troops from Iraq. Bush administration made an agreement with Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki to withdraw troops from Iraq by 2011. The subsiding of violence was a short term situation and U.S. left Iraq without a concrete plan to solve the Iraqi issues. Iraq had been divided into three parts between Kurds, Shia, and Sunni. The Kurds had gained autonomous region under Saddam as Kurdistan Regional Government but never got a complete independence due to the opposition from Turkey. Sunnis, on the other hand, faced discrimination and subjugation under the Shia Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki. He did not show any effort to minimize the sectarian conflict raging in Iraq, especially after 2009 election when U.S. withdrawal was nearing closer it further alienated the Sunnis.

The invasion of Afghanistan had created disadvantages to core Al-Qaeda because they lost their major base and their members. But the invasion of Iraq opened a new frontier for Al-Qaeda to carry their war forward. It knew the potential of the conflict that can bring for it to resuscitate, and a tool was required in carrying out the operations. The invasion of Iraq hurt the Islamic sentiments giving an impression that U.S. aimed at destroying Islam. This gave Al-Qaeda a chance to build a franchise in Iraq with ample support and motivation from the Iraqis in carrying forward the jihad. The improper handling of Iraq by U.S. after Saddam, gave a chance to the jihadist to take advantage of the situation and a turmoiled environment gave the chance for insurgency and terrorism to thrive.

Weak Government in Iraq:

The U.S. forces were withdrawing from Iraq and the government of Nouri al-Maliki did not sympathize with the Sunni and failed to deliver the promises of including the fighters of Anbar Awakening in the armed forces of Iraq. Instead, he was reluctant in settling the sectarian violence in Iraq. The demonstrations from the Sunni for a better livelihood were ignored which marginalized them politically. This led the disenfranchised Sunnis back into taking up arms and the hatred for the government made them return to the insurgency. In Iraq Nouri al- Maliki government became unpopular and corrupt. The protests began in Anbar province by 2012 spreading to other Sunni areas, this led to the clashes with the Iraqi police resulting in the death of thousands, in 2011 alone the reported death was 4,153 by violence (Iraq Bodycount 2012). In 2014 ISIS led an attack in Iraq, several Iraqi forces after learning about ISIS advancement deserted the army and failed in securing Iraqi territory. The armed offensive led by ISI proved costly to Iraq with the loss of Mosul in the north. ISI added gained $2 million (McQuagge 2015) by looting the banks and got access to military hardware and weapons left by the U.S. forces adding to its repository.

ISIS, however, could not complete its machinations due to the coming of the "surge" and "Anbar Awakening". The Iraqis were dissatisfied by the indiscriminate prosecution and criminality conducted by AQI and did not have the capacity for global jihad. AQI had several opponents and critics who opposed their actions. The province of Anbar was under the control of AQI by 2005 and they had unleashed terror in the community. The tribal leaders could not tolerate the rampant ruling of AQI in their territories, ranging from taxing on smugglings, and looting of goods which had been under the control tribal leaders. The murdering of such leaders created a feud between them and AQI.

Anbar province had developed a hatred for AQI and soon it spread to other regions. Soon the Sunni tribal leaders began co-operating with U.S. forces against AQI followed by several other Sunni-dominated areas joining with U.S. Not only Sunnis, but the members of Baath party also decided to side with U.S. in curtailing AQI. Apart from the tribes other Islamist and resistance groups also had become wary of AQI tactics and killings of their leaders. Like in 2007 Islamic Army of Iraq condemned AQI due to the death of thirty members in their hands, three resistance groups formed

Jihad and reform Front condemning AQI completely. In return, U.S. paid the forces with a good sum of money (Bruno 2008). Several other men who had lost jobs joined the alliance which came to be known as "Sons of Iraq", and the movement is known as "Awakening". This led to success in Sunni towns around Baghdad and by 2008 end Al-Qaeda faced 70% loss of its fighters. U.S. capability for the collection of intelligence also got a boost aided by the local alliance which led to the death of Abu Omar al-Baghdadi and Abu Ayyub al-Masri in 2010 in an air raid.

With the coming of democratically elected government in Iraq, the power fell into the hands of minority Shia. The Sunni Arabs had supported AQI but the rise of Shia to political helm made them insecure. Even the Kurds the second largest population in Iraq had a weight with their already established autonomous zone in 1991. When both Kurds and Shias were marginalized and oppressed under Saddam's rule, this placed the Sunnis in a strategically poorest state. The Sunni Arabs felt disenfranchised and feared the revenge on them by the Government; hence they turned to AQI for the protection of their interests.

Civil War in Syria:

Another factor leading to the rise of ISIS was the outbreak of revolutions in the Arab world which started around 2010 against the dictatorial regimes. The first was in Tunisia followed by Egypt against Hosini Mubarak, and soon the protest broke out in Morocco, Jordan, Bahrain, Yemen, Syria. The civil war in Syria gave immense strategic strength to ISIS. Syria has a combination of ethnicity and sects like Kurds, Turkmen, Yazidis, Sunni Arab, Shia Arab, with the majority Sunni Arab population. Since 1970 Syria was ruled by a dictatorial Alawite sect, the regime did not give political freedom to the people, there was a wide disparity in wealth and prevailing corruption encouraged the opposition groups to follow the Arab Spring demonstrations against Bashar al-Assad government. The protest changed into an armed rebellion and once again the sectarian nature of the conflict gained prominence. Plunging of Syria in civil war since 2011 gave ISIS an advantage which later proved to be a successful venture when it captured its territories.

The Syrian civil war provided a window of opportunity for Al-Qaeda, Abu Muhammad Golani was sent to Syria to open a branch of AQI. Golani took some of the fighters from ISIS (back then when ISIS was operating as AQI) along with him to

Syria and the new branch was formed in January 2012 with the (Gwynne 2015) name Jabhat al Nusra li-Ahli al Sham or the Nusra Front. This organization grew with speed in Syria and became one of the fierce opposition to the Assad regime, this group managed to secure a territorial hold in Syria.

Jabat al- Nusrah operated under Al-Qaeda in Syria when al-Baghdadi headed ISIS and infiltrated Syria in the start of the civil war. Al-Nusra front fighters were composed of men who had experience in years of insurgency and possessed skills superior to the fighters of Syrian insurgency which gave them a better leverage. Quickly the recruits increased in numbers and the civil war lost its secular character due to religious extremism propagated by al- Nusra. The growth of fighters also allowed them to expand their territorial hold in Syria. Later dispute was created between ISIS members and al- Nusrah which became one of the causes for ISIS to splinter from Al-Qaeda umbrella. Zawahiri tried to settle the dispute between the two but he preferred al-Nusrah to take charge of operations in Syria rather than ISIS, this dispute brought out the conflict in the open between Zawahiri and al-Baghdadi.

The war with al Nusra allowed ISIS to claim the territory of eastern Syria covering the long stretch of border with Iraq. Soon they advanced towards Iraq and quickly overran Mosul without any hassle due to the lack of resistance from the Iraqi forces and later Tikrit also fell. Very soon the spokesperson of ISIS Muhammad al-Adani announced the establishment of the Islamic caliphate (renames ISIS as IS) in June 2014 and naming Abu Bakr al –Baghdadi as its legit caliph. The vision of caliphate materialized with the control of the territory from eastern outskirts of Aleppo in Syria to Ramadi in Iraq.

Shia and Sunni Divide:

The rule by Shias in Iraq was considered as heresy by Salafist because the Shias rejected the legitimacy of first three caliphs Abu Bakr al-Siddiq, Umar Khattab, Uthman Bin Afan who were the revered rulers for Sunni Islam. Shia dominance in Iraq is anathema for Sunni which was encouraging enough to overthrow any form of Shia leadership. The struggle in Iraq did not actually pin on theological dispute rather it was wise to conclude that the prevailing status of Shia ascendancy to power in Iraqi politics after years of repression, led some Sunnis to harness rigid interpretation of Islam guided by Salafism to mobilize and sanction the insurgency against the new

power holders of Iraq. According to a letter written by Zarqawi to Al-Qaeda leaders in Afghanistan says that (Hafeez 2007) "Shia in our opinion are the key to change.... I mean targeting them and hitting them in their religious, political and military depth will provoke them to show Sunnis their rabies... if we succeed in dragging them into the arena of sectarian strife, it will become possible to awaken the inattentive Sunnis as they feel imminent danger and annihilating death at the hands of these Sabeans .... Shia who are a people of treachery and cowardice" (Zarqawi 2004)

Iraq has three main sects, Kurds residing in the mountainous semi-autonomous region of Northern Iraq supported by Turkey, majority of the sect in the central belt and around oil fields were Sunni Arabs and in the South Shias lived mired in poverty. Militancy in Iraq existed before the 2003 invasion, there was a civil war between Kurdish secular factions. AQI consolidated its power in Anbar province and Sunni-dominated areas, it attracted Sunni fighters to join its ranks, and foreign fighters to flock into Iraq to fight under its leadership. In a letter by Zarqawi obtained by the U.S. forces in Iraq mentions his detestation for Shias "they are insurmountable obstacle, the lurking snake, the crafty and malicious scorpion, the spying enemy, and the penetrating venom... these [have been] a sect of treachery and betrayal throughout history and throughout the ages. It is a creed that aims to combat the Sunnis... The Shi`i Safavid state was an insurmountable obstacle in the path of Islam. Indeed it was a dagger that stabbed Islam and its people in the back" (Zarqawi 2004). The utmost hatred against the Shias and legitimizing their dissemination provided a strategic option to garner support from the neutral Iraqi Sunnis. The sectarian aspect in carrying out jihad got its maximum play in Iraq and by AQI even its Host organization had not engaged in creating such a divide.

Zarqawi's argument mostly centered around the issue of near enemy which he thought to be a greater threat than the far enemy when he says in the letter explaining the situation in Iraq "The American army has begun to disappear from some cities, and its presence is rare. An Iraqi army has begun to take its place, and this is the real problem that we face, since our combat against the Americans is something easy... these enemy, made up of the Shi`a filled out with Sunni agents, is the real danger that we face, for it is [made up of] our fellow countrymen, who know us inside and out. They are more cunning than their Crusader masters, and they have begun, as I have said, to try to take control of the security situation in Iraq". (Zarqawi 2004). This excerpt from

the letter reveals the importance of Shia as the real enemy in Zarqawi thoughts. The only sect he preferred was Sunni willing to take up jihad and were considered as true Muslims.He had utter disgust for Kurds, disliked Shaykhs Sunnis and Muslim brotherhood, and detested Shias.

Before the sectarian war started in Iraq Al- Qaeda had a strategic relation with Shiite Iran. Iran facilitated training for the operatives and became the route for the fighters to travel from Afghanistan to the Middle East. Especially after 9/11 most of the Al-Qaeda members escaped to Iraq through Iran, 9/11 Commission report (2004) discovered that Saudi hijackers who supported the 9/11 operation transited through Iran. It has provided a safe haven for Al-Qaeda operatives especially after pushing out Al-Qaeda and Taliban from Afghanistan. After Bush set the "Axis of Evil" rhetoric and regime change threat Iran decided to allow Sunni jihadist to use Iran as a base to fight and resist U.S. in Iraq, this move by Iran was evident after the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003. Iran also used Al-Qaeda as a pawn in its relations with U.S., it controls several members of Al-Qaeda as a "bargaining chip" sometimes acting harshly to Al-Qaeda members and other time supporting them. A hold over Al-Qaeda members has urged the wider Sunni jihadists who were hostile to Shia Iran to control their behavior. This tactic of Iran also required Zawahiri not to harm Iranian assets due to the presence of many Al-Qaeda leaders in Iran. On the other hand, Al-Qaeda also had strategic aims in maintaining amicable relations with Iran as Byman (2015) expresses that use of transit routes via Iran was useful for carrying out the fights in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan and maintaining some safe haven in Iran.

Breaking of Ties with Its Parent Organization- Al-Qaeda:

Since the formation of AQI in 2004, the difference in the strategy and thinking had persisted with core Al-Qaeda which has been discussed above. The difference in strategy and methods in conducting the jihad was prevalent since the formation of AQI. The years of incompatibility and tension between the two groups finally surfaced in 2014. ISIS back then had started to gain prominence among the jihadists which overshadowed Al-Qaeda causing consternation to the latter. Holbrook (2015) views that Al- Qaeda suffered from material weaknesses compared to ISIS and Zawahiri gave importance to Al-Qaeda ideological and normative aspects rather than a structured group to win the hearts of the jihadists. Al-Qaeda was displeased by the use

of violence by ISIS predecessors starting from Zarqawi and tried to portray itself to be a moderate alternative for the militants. It developed a strong rhetoric against ISIS indiscriminate violence which Al-Qaeda condemned it as extra-legal in the purview of militant Islam.

Despite Zawahiri's rhetoric against ISIS and its brutality against the fellow Muslims, he could not avoid it from gaining popularity and acceptance by militant groups in the Islamic world. ISIS appealed to the regional militant groups in Egypt, Libya, Algeria, Yemen, Saudi Arabia initially and spread to south Asia, Africa and even in Northern part of Russia Caucasus region (BBC 2015). The Islamic terrorist groups in these regions pledged allegiance to ISIS with getting maximum support from Libya and Egypt. Although ISIS has garnered enemies around it who doesn't support them in their endeavor but the portrayal of a cause with ferocity for establishing a caliphate had attracted the groups who pays allegiance to them now.

A point of break came between Al-Qaeda central and ISIS with regards to al Nusra which was backed by Zawahiri. Al- Baghdadi wanted to take over the command of al Nusra activities which was dismissed by the central Al-Qaeda command. Moreover, al Nusra did not want to engage in mass executions and public cruelty that ISIS was engaging in Syria. Al-Baghdadi decision to absorb al Nusra in ISIS was not taken positively by Zawahiri, but some of the fighters defected to ISIS, and Baghdadi insisted on merging of the two groups. In a statement, he condemned the authority of Zawahiri by saying "I have to choose between the rule of God and the rule of Zawahiri, and I choose the rule of God the" (Ignatius 2013). The opposition from Zawahiri led to hostility between ISIS and Al-Qaeda which manifested into an open armed fight between al Nusra and ISIS. Full-scale fighting broke out between ISIS and al Nusra in January 2014, which killed around three thousand fighters. Al Nusra was defeated by ISIS in an offensive by mid-2014 and took control of al Nusra oil field which was a source of their income. After the offensive against al Nusra al-Baghdadi splintered from Al-Qaeda and rebranded the group from ISI to ISIS. The declaration of the Islamic caliphate and making al-Baghdadi as its caliph was condemned by Al-Qaeda and did not recognize the caliphate created by al-Baghdadi.

Al-Qaeda did not want a caliphate as an immediate goal but ISIS managed to establish it and controlled the territory at a remarkable speed by taking advantage of the civil

war in Syria and failure of government in Iraq. But controlling of a territory and ruling is not easy, the challenges that ISIS has to face while ruling a territory is something that Al-Qaeda don't have to face it and in the long term and Al-Qaeda will persist to survive. Zawahiri approach to ISIS which he considers it to be a subordinate group and a small movement in the bigger framework of jihad revealed his insecurity about the importance of hierarchy in his organization. Parting away from ISIS Al-Qaeda rescued itself from the challenges it had to face from foreign powers and the prediction made by Zawahiri regarding ISIS which has thrived on barbarity will eventually fail might be true in the future.

Strong Leadership of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi:

Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi became the leader of ISIS and oversaw its activities. After the surge, he rebuilt ISI which had suffered losses since 2006. He appointed several former intelligence and military officials from Saddam's regime in its ranks. He built a campaign to free AQI imprisoned members and took full advantage of the Syrian civil war to rebuild his organization by finding new recruits and motivating them to expand the jihadi cause. In 2014 al-Baghdadi proclaimed the return of caliphate in the Muslim world with himself being the Caliph legitimizing his authority to gain obedience from the Muslims of the world. His proclamation is however not viewed as legit by Sunni clerics, even some jihadi organization and in general Muslims all around the world (Byman 2015). After the declaration of forming ISIS in 2006 one of the leaders of AQI Abu Hamza al-Mujahir stated that " Mujahidin have reached the end of a stage of jihad and the start of a new one, in which we lay the first cornerstone of the Islamic Caliphate project and revive the glory of religion" (Hashim 2014). The project did not materialize for ISIS initially as it lacked consensus with other insurgency groups and Islamist organization rather its authority got declined by 2009.

When al-Baghdadi became the leader of ISIS, the organization needed a substantial work for its rejuvenation. There was a host of factors that led to the transformation of ISIS. Al-Baghdadi recognized the mistakes of his predecessors and rebuilt ISIS with a new structure. He built a strong centralized hierarchical structure with a flexibility to maneuver in the battlefield. The foreign fighters were recruited although restricted for top positions which were reserved for the officials from Baath party ex- intelligence and military officers.

The demise of one leader gives place for another in a terrorist organization and depending on the capability of a leader to lead determines the course it sets for the group to perform. Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi headed ISIS in 2010 and since then ISIS continued to grow in power. It rose to a helm by declaring an Islamic caliphate in Iraq in 2013 just after two years of taking over ISIs which Al-Qaeda could not manage to establish in two decades. The ideology that al-Baghdadi had was a departure from that of Bin Laden's ideology, Bin Laden's far off goal was the establishment of Islamic Caliphate but the priority for him was attacking the "far enemy" which would lead to an attack of Islamic countries provoking the Muslims to be radicalized enough resulting in a revolution and establishment of a caliphate eventually.

For al-Baghdadi, his aim was not to wait for such a long period of time instead he wanted the creation of caliphate as an immediate goal by carrying out the military conquest (McCants 2016). Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi a doctorate in Theology crafted his motives in attaining a goal that no other terrorist group or power had imagined of pursuing it. Although a lesser operational commander than Zarqawi, but more of an inspirational leader. Al- Baghdadi has been considered as "Osama's true heir" (Baker 2013). No states have been built without a war and no caliphate has won a war, this strategy made al-Baghdadi spread war, by deploying ruthless tactics to further radicalize the Muslims globally in joining his venture.

Impact of ISIS

ISIS has challenged the international order and the fundamental principles of modern states. ISIS has erased the territorial demarcation of borders based on Sykes-Picot of 1916 agreement that divided the region between French and Britain. The division was taken as a humiliation by the Arabs for drawing borders between Muslim nations. Al-Baghdadi used the pan-Arab sentiment to extrapolate the cause for a caliphate at the same time he has undermined the Saudi monarch authority who is the custodian of the holiest place of Mecca and Medina. The grand strategy of ISIS is to not only rule over the territory of Iraq and Syria by building a jihadist proto-state but also it wants to expand to other regions like Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon and other countries and ultimately the entire world. The territories that ISIS has captured are known as wilayat and it nullifies the existing boundaries. It rules with strict application of Sharia laws and has actual governing bodies.

ISIS managed to attract thousands of recruits and has successfully radicalized them through the use of social media and digital communication campaigns. The foreign fighters joined the rank and file of ISIS estimating about 30,000 which accounts for less than 10% of the ISIS fighters (Coco 2015). It created mass campaign appeal globally through its brutal beheadings videos and making their merchandise like t-shirts, hoodies with ISIS banner which might not win their battle but has appealed to the potential recruits. ISIS has been able to stand independently and owes no obligation to any institution or body. The Sunni jihadi movement had its sponsors in the past and enjoyed the patronage of Gulf States. Now ISIS is engaged in looting, smuggling, and kidnappings making itself financially independent. It has combined ideological fanaticism with extreme violence and has been able to destabilize the states which it initially helped to grow.

ISIS has created a crisis of great dimension which has involved major states of the world in the conflict and has a severe effect in the region. ISIS has used terror and barbaric violence to carry out their aims and plans to conduct attacks in Muslim countries until the State's capability runs out to fight them. States faced with chaos and wars are the major target by ISIS allowing it to take advantage of the situation and weakening the regime. Brutality has been the main theme of ISIS predecessors starting from Zarqawi followed by Omar al- Baghdadi to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. With the formation of al- Tawahid to AQI to ISI to ISIS the organizational techniques of use of terror has been based on gruesomeness and barbarity. The atrocity with which ISIS operates is unprecedented by any other terrorist organization. It has executed thousands of people and sexually enslaved women. It has not spared its own members, the number of foreign fighters has been reduced due to their ill treatment, discriminations, and executions. Since the time of declaration of the caliphate, ISIS has executed 400 of its own members (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights 2016) for defections and alleged spying offences. The violence and killings by ISIS have made civilians to flee from Iraq and Syria adding to the refugee crisis compounding to the problem of refugees from civil war in Syria. This has created a serious crisis to the neighboring countries including countries in Europe due to the massive influx of migrants.

Phillips (2014) points out that the idea of revived caliphate might sound like an apocalyptic fantasy but it shows the disaffection carries by the minority of Muslim

against the global order which is based on the western establishment. The perception of international order as the product of western imperialism to subjugate the Muslims worldwide by imposing western secularism and depriving them of their religious identity has influenced the Islamic extremism. The idea here is that even though ISIS comprises of people who were deprived and took recourse to terrorism and has been able to fulfill some of its goals by managing to cut out a piece of territory and imposed Sharia laws to rule. But the irony is that it has been massacring its own people and carrying out ethnic cleansing in the name of jihad.

The fratricidal violence with al Nusra shows the weaknesses of the jihadist movement and most importantly the break with Al-Qaeda does not show a fruitful future for ISIS. Till now ISIS has been terrorizing and has mastered the technique of conducting violence. But to consolidate caliphate it needs state like institutions to rule its subjects and in the long term if al-Baghdadi is successful in creating territorial governance than it might gain the support of the people but again the paradox lie in the idea the more State like ISIS evolves to be, greater there will be the chance for its defeat through conventional war.

Chapter 5

U.S. Response to ISIS

ISIS threat to U.S.

The threat from terrorism continually exists and poses a danger to the global order. The pattern of Islamic terrorism have evolved over time to be resilient and has adopted extreme fundamentalism in their ideological orientation. Al-Qaeda posed the greatest threat to U.S. in its history of terrorism because of its major objective of destruction of U.S. and by directly attacking the U.S. homeland. The genesis of ISIS is from the same brethren Al-Qaeda which followed Salafi jihadism and engulfing terrorism as its means to an end. But the new breed appears to have created greater radicalism based on barbaric brutality with apocalyptic undertones posing a threat not only to U.S. but to entire world due to its inclination of destroying anyone who comes in its way. This time the organisation that splintered out of Al- Qaeda was not only motivated by its predecessor core principles but more lethal, terrorising and destabilising with a characteristic combination of proto-state, organized crime, cult, and military acumen led by highly skilled former officials of Saddam Hussein army and intelligence unit.

The rise of Salafi Islamic terrorism poses a threat to entire globe today; this form of terrorism has not only threatened the sovereignty of states but has an appeal to radicalise the people and potential fighters to join the holy war from all around the world. ISIS have been able to accomplish what Al-Qaeda did not imagined to do in near future. It has destabilised the states in Middle East guided by violent extremism in its ideology as well as its actions. ISIS has ensnared the regional states in the conflict fuelled sectarian violence propagated by it since its inception and its aim of destroying the apostates, has wider implications for the international order.

The establishment of the caliphate and control of territory in Iraq and Syria as large as Britain showed the group is capable of accomplishing its motives. The group's affiliates in Yemen, Libya, Egypt has established provinces or *wilayat.* The three armed groups which owes allegiance to ISIS in Libya numbers around 5000 members (Leigh et al. 2016) having control in east, west and south areas, with complete control of Sirte city. In Yemen San'a province came under the control of ISIS affiliated militants who were mostly defectors from Al-Qaeda and conducted attacks against

Shia Houthis rebels. In Egypt the militant group affiliated to ISIS in Sinai province which has been growing in strength, and conducted attacks against the security forces and claimed responsibility for the crash of Russian flight. In Afghanistan ISIS announced the establishment of a new province called "Khorasan" province located on Afghanistan-Pakistan border area. It comprised of militants disaffected from Afghan and Pakistani Taliban, along with other Islamic militants.

The threat by ISIS to U.S. is not as direct as Al-Qaeda was but there is a looming fear of possible future attacks. Especially after the Paris attacks of November 2015, the CIA director John Brennan expressed that the attack is "inevitable" by ISIS in U.S. homeland (Richardson 2016). Maintaining a peaceful atmosphere in the Middle East is vital for U.S. and ISIS is a threat to its allies in the region. The group aims to topple the apostate like Saudi Arabia which maintains amicable relations with the U.S., and destabilizing Saudi Arabia can have wider consequences to the global order. Al-Qaeda had engaged in targeting U.S. mostly, and conducting terror campaigns against U.S. allies in the Middle East including Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan. Intentions of attacking the major states in the Middle East can be counterproductive for ISIS which might lead to loss of support from the Muslims. On the other hand, ISIS believes in targeting 'near enemy' by eliminating the regional opposition and apostates rather than attacking the 'far enemy' i.e. the western states. ISIS has not hesitated to eliminate fellow Muslims including the Sunni sect who have criticized their aims.

ISIS has posed a greater challenge to the regional actors than Al-Qaeda ever did. The group has carried out various terrorist attacks in Saudi Arabia, and harmed the interests of other states. Its affiliate's demonstrations against Egypt's government in Sinai show ISIS rejection of Arab governments. The group has also spread anti-Israel rhetoric and encourages Palestinians to attack Israelis. Though ISIS has not yet attacked Israel directly but attacks inspired by the group cannot be ruled out. The direct threat from ISIS is the possibility emanating from the returning foreign fighters, who can bring back the jihadist ideology and hatch an attack in their originating country. In the case of U.S., there were American citizens who have been motivated for joining ISIS.

The ideology propagated by ISIS have been able to attract foreign fighters from over 90 countries including U.S., according to a report there were 250 Americans (Ratson

and Inskeep 2015) who traveled to Syria and Iraq for being recruited in ISIS. The report also says that the most of the Americans were being killed there and the ones returning were mostly being arrested. But the popularity of ISIS has increased and it continues to spread, and the radically affected Americans who have stayed back n Syria have used social media to recruit more Americans.

The uses of social media have allowed the recruiting strategy of ISIS to work successfully by enticing the prospective recruits with their ideology and propaganda. Radicalizing reach of ISIS has led even the Westerners from U.S. and Europe with motivation to such an extent to join the battlefield in Syria and Iraq. The shootings in San Bernardino California in December 2015, has been linked to ISIS supports having operational links to the organization, and similar shootings in Texas Tennesse have been attributed to be inspired by Salafi jihadism. These attacks were praised by ISIS defining them as *Ansar* meaning supporters of caliphate although the group did not directly guided the attacks, it reveals the nature of its psychological influence on people.

According to a study (Quantum 2015) of 49 ISIS militants and their personal testimonies, who were divided into three categories of Internal consisting of Iraqi and Syrian nationals, External Arab including Arabs from countries except, Iraq and Syria and External Western comprising Americans and Europeans. The study was based on psycho-contextual analytical technique developed by a Canadian Psychologist to discover motivation of people. The finding of the study was to know the motivating factor for joining ISIS. The fighters were stratified according to their regions they hailed from and the study found out that the main reasons why fighters join ISIS including Americans. The result was that 62% of the Western fighters opted for "identity" out of nine other motivating factors to choose from the chart. This study revealed that the westerners were motivated to join jihad in search of an identity, they felt unsecured in the western culture and lives of their countries and seek out to find their identity and have a sense of belongingness by joining jihadism. Whereas the fighters from Syria and Iraq were motivated by money to join the militants. Drawing from this study it becomes clear that one can determine the ideological affects that ISIS uses to lure ordinary people in joining their project. This becomes a major problem in making counterterrorism effort to be a success because it is easier to

overcome those motivations driven by money rather than those motivations which is based on ideas and question of identity.

U.S. Counterterrorism Policy in Response to ISIS

The counterterrorism policy of U.S. in the wake of terrorist threat from ISIS saw a departure from Bush policy. The change came due to the stark differences between the belief systems of both the Presidents. Obama did not speak on the similar lines of hardened realism and war rhetoric as spoken by Bush. The strategy of Obama has focused on returning to constitutional or return to rule of law policy rather than based on war footing. The Obama administration showed the inclination of not being reckless when it came to using U.S. war machine that Bush had used it without any congressional oversight and frequently avoiding established international law and conventions. Criticisms from home and abroad rose due to dragging of the country into two expensive wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, which prolonged for a long time without any visible signs of success. This kept Obama from following counterterrorism strategy that was rooted on hard power strategy.

The counterterrorism policy followed by Obama was to have less reliance on military and rebuilding counterterrorism policy based on ethical grounds. Under Obama the rhetoric of U.S. counterterrorism policy got softened in tone in relation to the Muslims and the Arab world, in order to have renewed foreign affairs by making a shift from Bush policy with emphasis on multilateralism, use of Soft power, and diplomacy, and marking a departure from Bush hard edged rhetoric. The main feature of Obama policy for counterterrorism has been targeting killings, electronic surveillance, providing assistance to military and intelligence to the allied countries. Apart from this Obama has also taken preventive measures to avoid terrorism from emerging by engaging with communities that has been vulnerable to recruits of terrorism.
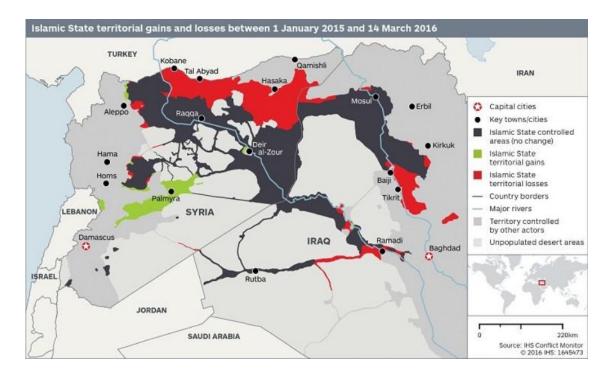
Military Engagement:

Obama decided to pull back the U.S. forces from Iraq and he successfully did so which was hailed as a success by his administration. When he was elected, ending the war in Iraq and bringing back troops home became one of his commitments. In 2010 Obama announced the need for withdrawal of troops from Iraq to be in their good interests. Some critics have seen this decision of Obama as premature and it was only

realized when ISIS captured the cities in Iraq. The use of military power was inevitable due to the increase of crisis in Syria compounded by ISIS advance which threatened the spilling of conflict to other regions. The first airstrike commenced as early as September 2014, in the city of Raqqa a stronghold of IS (Mullen 2014). Obama initially showed leniency in using the hard military power capabilities but it was not a complete departure from Bush policy due to the use of aerial attacks. The use of a massive number of drones has been one of the important features of Obama administration deployed for targeted killings of terrorist leaders and disrupting their operations. The use of drones to attack the targets with accuracy has allowed Obama to contain terrorists. But its use is not free from collateral damage and civilian casualties. For example, in 2009 out of 709 people killed in Pakistan only 5 were the targets (Zulaika 2012). Although there is inconsistency in the number of unintended people killed to be recognized by the administration and the number that independent investigations reveal, figures way higher than official statements (Freidorsdorff 2016). Obama wanted to avoid the excess in using the military power that Bush had done but when it came to the use of drone attacks in targeting Al-Qaeda links the policy was bent towards largesse of drone use.

The most important factor taken into consideration while conducting aerial bombing is the collateral damage inflicted by it. Apart from the infrastructure being destroyed loss of civilian lives are the most concerning aspect and critical for U.S. In Syria alone the number of air strikes amounted to 5,700 till mid 2015 (Ross 2015) and out of the 52 air strikes around 459 civilians lost their lives even though the Central Command only recognises death of two Syrians. The administration denial to reveal the real figures suggests the avoidance of criticism from the world at large. The military aspect of counterterrorism policy has been dealing with two major responsibilities in Iraq and Syria one denying safe haven to ISIS and another is building partner capacity. The method used to fulfill the first responsibility is through airstrikes, use of Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance assets. The second responsibility is fulfilled by train and equip program and by providing assist and advise efforts to the indigenous ground forces. The demand for Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance has been increased due to the counterterrorism campaign against ISIS. The improvement in the quality of these fields has improved over the years, especially in carrying out operations against ISIS. Due to the lack of U.S. ground troops and lack of access to

certain parts of Syria robust Intelligence and surveillance is necessary to have information about the security situation.

ISIS represents an unconventional threat with hybridization of its strategy and methods. It has a very strong structure with an ability to refill its lost fighters and leaders. According to U.S. the official figures of ISIS fighters is estimated to be 25,000 (RAND 2016) in February 2016 with a net gain of 13000 fighters since the war began. This shows that ISIS has managed to gain from its losses indicating that the attrition-based strategy has not worked in curbing ISIS. The resilience ISIS has shown so far needs a stronger commitment of U.S. and coalition to have a successful counterterrorism strategy. Operationally ISIS is very adaptive with its capability to shift from military maneuver to guerrilla based tactics, depending on the situation, it has fighters highly adept in using weapons and tactics. Nonetheless, ISIS faces problems the main vulnerability it faces is due to its holding of a territory which is susceptible to conventional attacks. The aerial attacks by U.S. and coalition forces have caused strategic territorial losses to ISIS. The figure below shows the territorial hold and losses by ISIS in Syria and Iraq till March 2016:

Source: IHS Conflict Monitor 2016

Involvement of external actors has complicated the conflict further in Syria. The entry of Russia and Iran in Syria has been trying to bolster Assad regime to defeat the oppositional forces.

Iran has supported Assad regime with foreign Shia militias and Hezbollah fighters and Russia with high-end weapons and equipment to wipe out the oppositions of Assad. U.S. and coalition partners made a move of increasing the weapon supply to the rebels since Russia started air bombardment in late 2015. As Russia has been on the offensive against the moderate opposition that U.S. considers to be significant in fighting ISIS. U.S. has been uneasy due to Iran-Syria-Russia coalition air strikes, because of the possibility of deepening the conflict. U.S. doesn't want the Syrian conflict to turn into a U.S.-Russia proxy war as stated by Obama (Entous 2015). The increase in the supply of weapons by U.S. has been justified to maintain military pressure on Assad, to make him step down from power and bring him to a negotiating table. Support of Iran to Assad regime has mixed reasons, Iran's support of Shia militias and backing of Hezbollah with increasing cooperation with Russia for expansion in the area of arms sales. Even if the ISIS threat gets curtailed the chance for Shia extremism can destabilize the region deeply.

Soft Power:

The "war on terror" was replaced by "Countering Violent Extremism" (White House 2016). The use of words explains the need to curb extremism, which intends to contain the Islamic terrorism practiced by Al-Qaeda and ISIS. As Stern (2015) expresses that Bush considered Democracy promotion as the most efficient way to defeat terrorism and extremism. Stern argues that the policy failed as a short term goal because new democracies are fragile and usually, the rule of majority often relegates the minorities to the background. This makes the minority disenfranchised and allows extremism to thrive. Obama instead of focusing on democracy promotion tried to curb the tide of extremism in war-torn and disturbed places which are ripe for recruitment in militant organizations and decided to address the underlying causes for such conditions. Countering Violent Extremism aims to discredit terrorist ideologies, by addressing the grievances and economic political causes those exploited by the terrorists. It focuses on improving the governance of the region by giving importance to developmental projects and education. This policy is expected to avoid the radicalization of youth

from joining terrorist organizations at home and abroad. In order to fulfill this goal, Global Engagement Centre was created to enable the people to empower themselves and find an alternative by working with governments and NGOs, and by helping the youths from falling prey to the nihilistic vision of ISIS. The focus is on education promotion, fighting corruption because the terrorist groups as has been seen have exploited failed governance which commits human rights violations. Sometimes the disaffected population side with the terrorist group like in Syria and Iraq where the maximum fighters who have been motivated to join ISIS have been due to the provision of good monetary benefits provided by the group. Obama administration created Counterterrorism Partnership Fund which is not only meant to help the military's capability but also bolster the diplomatic engagement, and foreign assistance program as a part of measures in avoiding emerging threat from terrorism with its global partners. But as mostly viewed by the critics this fund enhances the militarisation process of counterterrorism policy. Apart from capacity building measures the fund aims to expand the abilities of Department of Defence.

U.S. has opted for Diplomacy as a part of solution facing Syria with a wider aim of countering ISIS. Given the complex nature of the conflict, the solution to defeat ISIS cannot be successful without the diplomatic political settlement with Syria. As ISIS gained momentum due to the lack of proper political environment and filled the power vacuum due to the instability in the region, its defeat will also be possible after the settlement of the conflict in Syria. The diplomatic effort has been part of the counterterrorism policy for finding a political solution for Syria. In Vienna, the meeting of countries led by U.S. aimed at arriving at political negotiations between the opposition forces and Assad representatives. It was to be followed by a cease-fire, with U.N. backing the resolution for a political settlement of Syria led by U.S. and Russia. The diplomatic effort is required when the military option could not fully succeed, hence the diplomatic efforts has been employed by the Obama administration since late 2015 to bring the opposition forces and Assad to arrive at a negotiation.

Multilateralism:

U.S. counterterrorism policy saw a departure from Bush unilateralism. Obama aimed at having a coalition and support by international community rather than acting alone to fight ISIS. Hence, a coalition of 66 states started working to contain ISIS. Multilateralism has been witnessed in Obama strategy for counterterrorism by aligning with traditional allies like Britain, France and also regional powers like Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Turkey, and UAE. The coalition has been engaging in providing assistance to the local forces, conducting air strikes. Contribution from the coalition consists of both military and non-military aspects. The coalition provides humanitarian assistance through the contribution of funds and provides training to the ground forces. In the military campaigns, there are about 22 partners who have been conducting air strikes since mid-2014 with the launch of operation "inherent resolve". The main aim of the coalition partner is to support military operations, capacity building and training which is been taken up by U.S. and Iraq.

Another function is stopping the foreign fighters from joining ISIS and other extremist organization led by Turkey and Netherlands. The third function is to tap the finances and funding of ISIS which is looked after by Italy, Saudi Arabia, and U.S. Fourth function involves providing assisting in the humanitarian relief. The major military component of the coalition is air strikes, training local forces, and targeted special operations (CSR 2016). The Coalition has been significant in conducting operations in Iraq and Syria and has established functions that have been very important for the accomplishment of tasks by the military forces. The non-military coalition partners have been providing training and assistance to the local forces. The Coalition support fund, Coalition Readiness 48 Support Program, Lift and Sustain have helped the U.S. forces.

The coalition not only made a military commitment but also other responsibilities which were divided among its partners. The partners have been training and equipping the local forces in Iraq and Syria and have also cooperated in cutting out ISIS finances by sharing information and barring access to banks globally. The million dollar fund for ISIS comes mainly through oil sale in black markets, looting of banks from Iraq, and other forms of criminal activity like extortion, smuggling, kidnappings. The U.N. moved a resolution to strengthen the cooperation among states to curb the flow of

financial assets to ISIS. The coalition is cooperating in information sharing and collaborating with the private sector to identify suspect's transactions. The Counter ISIL Finance Group led by Italy and Saudi Arabia is a coalition of another number of countries working to disrupt the financial flow of ISIS while cooperating with other 30 countries. This mechanism prevents the use of an international financial system, deny ISIS funding from abroad, prevent the financing of ISIS affiliates in other countries, disrupt the economic resources from which ISIS draws its money from.

The Humanitarian assistance has been carried out by U.S. led coalition in Iraq for effective and inclusive governance leading to stabilization and reconciliation process. The coalition partners have contributed to a fund of $50 million (Obama 2016). There is cooperation among the partners in curbing the flow of fighters in ISIS ranks by making laws in their countries and curbing the travel of the people from joining ISIS and other extremist organizations. The Counter ISIL Coalition Working Group on Foreign Terrorist Fighters led by Turkey and Netherlands is working with the partners in implementing the U.N resolution UNSCR 2178 to curb the flow of foreign fighters.

The Assad regime got weakened by ISIS and other opposition forces. The situation demanded Assad to take support from Iran and Russia. Russia increased its support to Assad regime since September 2015 and has since been conducting air strikes against ISIS and other opponents of Assad regime. Russia has been trying to strengthen Assad military prowess by sending artillery, helicopters and rocket systems to reclaim the territory that Assad lost to his opponents which included a naval base of Russia. The most visible gains from coalition effort have been the air strikes allying with indigenous local forces to gain back territories from ISIS. The coalition strikes from August 2014 to beginning of 2016 has conducted thousands of air strikes in Iraq and Syria, which has destroyed their tanks and heavy weapon systems, storage facilities, command, and control structure and oil production facilities (Congressional Hearings 2016) and reclaimed about 40% territory from ISIS. The drawback of the coalition is the problem of coordination marred by various other conflicting interest and selfish aims which acts as an impediment in counterterrorism measures.

Use of Local Forces:

Reliance on indigenous forces as ground troops for fighting the terrorists has been one of the main element of Obama counterterrorism policy. Instead of deploying ground

troops comprising of American forces, the strategy has been to use the local groups to take and hold the territory. The logic behind such a strategy is to allow indigenous populations who can only be effective in holding the territory permanently from ISIS, in addition, to support the local population. It has been the most viable solution to defeat a proto-state like ISIS, by using the local forces that are fully motivated to free the area from ISIS hold. U.S. strategy is to partner and shore up the local forces in attaining the objective of defeating ISIS. U.S. avoided the option of deploying its troops on the ground due to the risks of prolonging the battle, and without any surety of getting successful results in the end; like the experienced in Iraq. The direct involvement leads to the rise in expenses of the war which might be opposed at home.

In Syria U.S. aimed at training the locals and equipping them to fight against ISIS, but this endeavor could not be successful in producing recruits which initially thought out to be. One of the reasons was that the rebel groups got more interested in fighting Assad regime rather than fighting ISIS (Shear et al. 2015). Train and equip program had to be dropped in late 2015 due to the lack of rebels willing to join the program. The aim was an estimation of 15000 rebels would emerge from the program but only 60 could be churned out. In the face of such difficulties, U.S. supported the moderate opposition of Assad regime.

Among the most victorious rebels to fight against ISIS have been Syrian Democratic forces. The YPG (People Protection Unit) forces in Syria comprises of mainly ethnic Kurds and it is the military wing of PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party). YPG along with some factions of Free Syrian Army collaborated to oust ISIS from Alleppo and Ar-Raqqa in 2015, together known as Syrian Democratic Forces. This group was significantly successful in driving ISIS from its stronghold especially in disrupting the communication lines between Turkey and ISIS held territory by capturing Tal Abyad. YPG has been the only significant force in Syria who have been able to defeat ISIS in Kobane, Tal Abyad, Hasakah, al-Houl (Carnegie 2015).

The Kurdish rebels have been a hope of relief for U.S. in carrying out counterterrorism strategy against ISIS but due to Turkeys sour relation with PKK and arming of the YPG by U.S. might upset Turkey. The recent developments made U.S. vocal about arming non-Kurdish members of Syrian Democratic forces under the banner of "Syrian Arab Coalition", to have stable relation with Turkey. Turkey is one of the

major coalition partners and supports U.S. by allowing to use its bases for conducting air strikes.

Another opposition supported by U.S. is Free Syrian Army which consists of ten major groups and many other smaller factions. The group is fragmented due to the backing by Saudi Arabia and Qatar. U.S. supports this group to fight against ISIS. Especially its Southern front is the strongest with support from U.S. which has provided it with non-lethal ammunitions. Compared to Syria U.S. have higher chance in Iraq in combating ISIS, due to the Iraqi government cooperative attitude with U.S. Iraqi Security force is important for some of the counterterrorism operations because of the numerical strength of its soldiers but the leadership became very weak and especially after the forces were stopped training from 2010 onwards by U.S. It has been receiving weapons and equipment from U.S. on request by Iraqi government. It performed defensive against ISIS and took back eastern Anbar province from ISIS.

Another important force is the Counter Terrorism Service which performs special operations. To increase the ability of this force U.S. and coalition special operation forces revised its training program with an aim of increasing its numbers. The Kurdish Security Forces include the Peshmerga, they were able to push back ISIS from northern Iraq and expanded territory of Kurdish Regional Government, it defended mostly Kurdish areas. This group has been supplied by advisory missions and ammunitions from the U.S. and coalition. The tribal Sunnis from Iraq has been one of the groups that U.S. persuaded the Iraqi government to include in the army, and their intelligence was frequently used to get information on ISIS. The program of arming Sunnis started in 2015 only after fall Ramadi to ISIS. This program ensures the inclusivity of Sunnis in the Iraqi Army by helping U.S. and coalition to carry out fight against ISIS.

Use of indigenous forces has its own problems due to mixed political-military problems existing in Iraq and Syri. U.S. strategy to use indigenous forces was not favorable in the very beginning of the conflict. It was in 2015 that the policy of train and equip local forces have started to pay off. In Iraq the government tried to keep Sunnis isolated but due to the fall of Ramadi it had to arm them to defend its territory against ISIS whereas in Syria majority of the opposition forces were interested in ousting Assad regime rather than fighting ISIS. Due to political and military

complications finding a common ground between various local forces has been difficult in wiping out ISIS stronghold in the captured regions. The role of Iran is important because it not only alleys with Assad regime but also have links with the militias which is part of the opposition force in Iraq and Syria and has a strong alliance with the Shia majority in Iraq. Turkey's hostile relation with YPP avoids U.S. in heavily arming them even though they are the major ground forces needed to fight ISIS.

Overall the train and equip program for forces in Iraq and Syria yielded around 19,000 Iraqi Security forces (Congressional Hearings 2016) by U.S. and its coalition partners by December 2015. The forces trained were able to perform better counterterrorism campaigns against ISIS compared to those who did not receive the training. There are drawbacks to this policy as critics argue that the recognition of enemy is difficult among the forces. Especially when U.S. is providing training for them it might come as a 'blowback' and it has proven to be true when the local forces killed one of the head officer of the coalition forces in Afghanistan (Salahuddin 2015). Avoiding insider attack on coalition forces can be difficult because the potential enemies can infiltrate the training forces which cannot be identified easily. In Syria Obama decided to allay with the rebels of Assad regime to fight against ISIS

Electronic Surveillance:

Surveillance of communication system has taken a stride under Obama. Reliance on this aspect for counterterrorism measures has expanded dramatically, and it has become one the main tool for counterterrorism policy. Given the likely hood of increasing cyber-terrorism threat in future electronic surveillance is a growing requirement to curtail this threat. Social media has become a hub for the jihadist to recruit new fighters, and as mentioned in the paragraph above that ISIS has successfully recruited American citizens in joining their fight. Given such a circumstance prevention of the spread of extremist ideology and ideas is crucial in avoiding the recruits from joining ISIS, such activity is monitored via the electronic surveillance and has become one of the major element in U.S. counterterrorism policy. ISIS has a strong media bureaucracy which actively manages its military and messaging campaigns. The organization has central media foundation (Gambhir 2016) which carries out media campaigns and messages. The centralized messages are

passed through several media outlets like provincial reporting offices, unofficial media collectives, and online internet content supporters. The messages are targeted for the different set of audiences from local Syrians to ISIS supporters in the Middle East to the Western audiences. The media operation of ISIS has inspired other terrorist group like Jabat al-Nusra who published their monthly magazine following ISIS publication of English language magazine called Dabiq.

The use of digital communication has not only allowed ISIS to use social media to make itself widely known like previously done by other organization but has embarked on audiovisual campaigns contributing to its increasing popularity, and appeal. According to a finding by Brookings Institution (Lesaca 2015) ISIS released around 845 audiovisual campaigns between 2014 and 2015, with more than 46,000 twitter accounts owned by its supporters. The messages sent in social media had images influenced by the modern culture representing the global youth. The qualitative analysis of the videos revealed that it had been inspired by movies, videogames and popular culture. The audiovisual campaign is segmented; the group has created products matching with the audience that it is trying to reach out to with the use of different languages. ISIS used images of modern western culture to make their project whose objective is based on anti-modern values.

U.S. took the initiative to cut out the digital communication structure of ISIS which has been a major source of spreading messages to attract recruits. Its communication strategy has been a challenge in carrying out effective counterterrorism policies. Not only ISIS can use digital communications to disseminate its propaganda but also has a wider threat of cyber-attacks to critical infrastructures like nuclear sites. The latest finding has revealed ISIS presence in the dark web (Clarke and Porche 2016) which are the websites not accessible to the general public which has content of every type of crime that takes place through the internet. This capability can be used to plan a major attack in the Western countries, because even if the group gets defeated physically its infiltration in digital communication can be a major threat.

U.S. National Security Agency specializes in electronic surveillance, and its military counterpart is focused on cyber attacks from various U.S. enemies like North Korea, Iran, China, Russia. But in recent developments, the cyber-operations has been directed against ISIS internet networks (Sanger 2016). The campaign is carried out to

disrupt ISIS operations with an aim to avoid the spread of ISIS message to the world and curtail their recruitment strategy. The use of cyber weapons also aims at disrupting their command and control communications. The initiative of Obama administration has been trying to contain communication strategy of ISIS. It has designated a special Envoy for strategic counterterrorism communications at the Department of State to handle the message propaganda of the group. U.S. has partnered with UAE (White House 2015) to establish digital communications hub to and defeat ISIS strategy for recruiting through digital communications.

U.S. Involvement in Syria

For U.S. Middle East has been a quagmire and the engagement is not going to end soon in the near future. As Islamic terrorism has taken its roots and evolved over time, U.S. cannot ignore the prevailing conditions that are going to have dangerous consequences for it to deal with. Iraq has been a problem for U.S. since its invasion of 2003 but the Syrian crisis has proven to be more complicated than Iraq. Unlike Iraq where Obama administration has made an effort to send experts in advising the Iraqi Army and continually made efforts by communicating with the Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi to settle the sectarian divide between the two sects by incorporating the Sunnis in Iraqi system to curtail the threat from ISIS and solve the problems faced by Iraq. Syria represents a more complicated picture. The Syrian crisis is difficult to overcome by U.S. which has become the most disturbed place in the region. It has been marred by civil war, sectarian violence, and Islamic terrorism, compounding to the crisis the hostility exist between U.S. and Syrian regime of Bashar al-Assad. The spillover effect of the Syrian crisis has not only affected U.S. but has embroiled regional states in the conflict.

Relation of Syria with U.S. before the civil war was not amicable one due to the allaying of Assad regime with Iran and Hezbollah and also it was developing nuclear reactor in secrecy until 2007 when the facility was destroyed by Israel. The dictatorial regime of Assad was known to have suppressed the Sunni population who were in a majority. In the atmosphere of Arab Spring revolts witnessed in Middle East countries, U.S. did not expect that the revolt for democratic freedom in Syria would end up in a lengthy conflict with no sign of the defeat of the regime which is now backed by Iran, Russia, and Hezbollah. As the revolt escalated U.S. supported the opposition forces and condemned Assad regime but did not commit itself by taking military actions due

to the war fatigue from previous wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, also the popular sentiment of the public in U.S. against involvement in another conflict.

Obama administration tread with cautiousness and acted more of a spectator than the major player due to the practical reasons of getting less chance victory in case of involvement in the conflict. As Gani (2014) argues that the Obama administration focused on national interest and retrenchment rather than the promotion of Democracy and regime change as a viable option in case of complex situation persisting in Syria. Hence, the new administration's main focus on Syria was not guided by procurement of democratic regime in but was more related to the application of counterterrorism policy and stopping the advancement of ISIS.

The realism with which U.S. has been guided to conduct its foreign policy took a backseat when there was a lack of response in Syria. The use of chemical weapons by Assad changed the perspective for U.S. in terms of policy planning for Syria but it stayed more of a rhetoric than an act according to the stated plan by the President. In a statement, President Obama expresses "We have been very clear to the Assad regime, but also to other players on the ground, that a red line for us is we start seeing a whole bunch of chemical weapons moving around or being utilized. That would change my calculus....That would change my equation....We're monitoring that situation very carefully. We have put together a range of contingency plans." (Ball 2012). Going by the statement Obama's red line threat for Assad did not seem to work when a chemical agent was used in Ghouta which killed 1300 people and did not react with a military strike which was the intention earlier, this showed a disconnect from the earlier statement. Philip Gordon advisor on the Middle East in NSC of Obama reveals that the President felt the "Washington playbook" which was the set of understandings by the President that required being used when provoked by a rogue state, was over-militarized and overused (Goldberg 2016). This decision was not taken positively by the world when a superpower talked about taking actions when the need arises but not delivering it in reality. It was after the entry of ISIS in Syria that U.S. reacted with military strikes.

The nonchalant attitude of U.S. administration regarding Syria and Assad's breach of humanitarian law was due to the lack of national goal gains, fear of making Syria like what Bush did to Iraq, and fear of provoking Iran who was an ally to Syria avoided U.S. in making military advance in Syria. ISIS provided a strategy for U.S. to gain

back its reputation over Syria and renewed its efforts in the form of counterterrorism policy. The entry of U.S. in Syria to fight ISIS changed the equation between several actors in the region. First, Assad regime did not have to deal with ISIS problem, as U.S. took action against it by air strikes and reducing one of its enemies. Secondly, it made the regime gather support from other states due to Assad's use of U.S. imperialism line of thinking to intervene in Syria and destroy his regime .This led to the involvement of regional actors and even Russia for that matter in late 2015. Russia entered the conflict due to Assad's request for help in ousting ISIS from Syria. Russia an age old ally of the regime provided Assad regime with aerial bombing of the group. But Russia later targeted the opposition forces of Assad including Free Syrian Army who have allied with U.S. to fight ISIS making a tense relationship between U.S. and Russia.

The opposition groups against Assad regime in Syria were fragmented and U.S. required to ally with the opposition to fight ISIS. There were major four factions fighting for control of areas, those were Assad Alawite government forces, the opposition forces, Islamist groups, ISIS, Kurdish (YPG) forces. But the possibility of oppositions sharing their intelligence and aligning with each other became another problem. Hence, it would have been disastrous if the arms supplied to the opposition forces ended up in the hands of other Islamist jihadi groups operating in Syria. This scenario has occurred previously in Iraq when ISIS got hold of military hardware donated by U.S. to the Iraqi army and was later used against the U.S. forces. Most of the opposition groups are fighting against Assad regime, but U.S. has ISIS, AL-Qaeda affiliate in Syria called Al-Nusra Front and Assad to deal with in the conflict.

Comparison of Bush and Obama Counterterrorism Policy

The legacy of Bush policies and "war on terror" changed the face of U.S. national security structures which continued after he left the office. By the time Obama took over the presidency he was faced with the results of two wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the failures of Bush administration to provide solutions for Iraq. Now the action towards Iraq and Afghanistan was that of "exit strategy". Obama was not satisfied by the counterterrorism policy of his predecessor Bush. Which is evident in his speech in Cairo University by saying that Bush "acted contrary to our traditions" (Obama 2009) which harmed the overall fight against Al-Qaeda. He had inclinations of making a new counterterrorism policy for U.S. and not to tread on the path pursued by Bush.

Obama departed from Bush counterterrorism strategies and he declared an end to "war on terror" (Priest 2009). The first policy initiative that Obama has taken to undo Bush counterterrorism measures was the closing down of Guantanamo Bay facility where suspects of terrorism were detained without the right of habeas corpus. Another measure was the closing of CIA prisons or "black sites" all around the world used for interrogating the suspects of terrorism with unlawful techniques used prohibited under the Geneva Convention for the treatment of prisoners of war. Obama decided to make U.S. counterterrorism policies to be transparent and ethical compared to Bush. He wanted to have less reliance on military power and not repeat what Iraq faced in 2003 invasion leading to a disastrous outcome.

However, the counterterrorism policy compared under Obama has been marked by continuity as well as by change. As articulated by Stern (2015) that whereas Bush approach was guided by an aggressive posture, Obama has been that of idealism and wishful thinking. This approach is not suitable at a time when Islamic terrorism, civil wars, state failures in the Middle East and Africa pose a significant threat to U.S. The drawdown of troops from Iraq was an added advantage for ISIS to grow and attack the vulnerable Iraqi state mired by sectarian conflict. Another continuity in Obama counterterrorism policy was regarding the closure of Guantanamo Bay detention center, which he had initially proposed as one of the most important changes he would make after entering the office, but did not seem to materialize because of the tremendous congressional pressure Obama could not fulfill his promise to shut the detention center.

Under Obama, the counterterrorism policy has shown success in containing Al-Qaeda and no major attacks has reported in U.S. due to his use of surveillance system and improved intelligence. One of the major successes was the tracking and killing of Bin Laden in 2011 in a raid in Pakistan. The decapitation of Bin laden was a significant event for dismantling Al-Qaeda and for the doings of 9/11, which the intelligence and CIA worked to accomplish it. But the threat of terrorism and Islamic Salafi extremism became acute owing to ISIS. Al-Qaeda got replaced by another leader Zawahiri who now heads the Al-Qaeda central. Under Zawahirir there has been an increase in Al-Qaeda's affiliates all around the world. One aspect that Obama seems to have overdone than Bush regarding the counterterrorism policy is the targeted killings. Targeted killings under Obama administration increased quite dramatically as Compared to

Bush, even though Obama was critical of the excess use of military action in Iraq by Bush. The use of drones against militants and terrorist has been significant in U.S. foreign policy. Bush administration used drones to target militant 50 times during his term, on the other hand, Obama authorized 506 drone strikes (Zenko 2016) within first few years of his term although the terrorist being killed in the drone strikes has also been higher statistically during Obama administration compared to that of Bush.

Byman (2015) expresses that containing Al-Qaeda is a counterterrorism challenge to the U.S. because of its decentralized nature and its affiliates existing in about thirteen countries. U.S. has been working with its allies in disrupting and destroying Al-Qaeda links whereas ISIS is composed of fighters which aim at controlling the territory by carrying out total war making its intention clear for U.S. and coalition forces to contain it by air strikes and destroying their camps. But the number of fighters has increased from 30,000 approximately in 2014, to estimated 100,000 as of 2016, even though CIA claims unrealistically low figures of 30,000 fighters (Ross 2015). Not only the fighters are increasing in ISIS from Syria and Iraq there are nationals of 90 countries who have traveled to join ISIS and adding to this problem there are Islamist groups who has claimed allegiance to ISIS.

The counterterrorism policy of Obama has not taken any drastic changes to contain ISIS as some critics of Obama have pointed out, that he has applied same old methods and strategies. Despite all the rhetoric of defeating and destroying ISIS the strategy to defeat has been that of conducting air strikes, using the enemies of ISIS to fight against it. There are no significant methods innovated to differentiate the counterterrorism policy against ISIS from the traditional methods. Still, some argue that the strategy has not been able to deliver the results fully. The effort by U.S. has not yet been able to stop the movement of logistical inventory from ISIS controlled areas. According to a UN Security Council report of 2015 around 22,000 foreign fighters traveled to Syria and Iraq to join ISIS, and out of which 3,400 were from U.S. and Europe. While comparing Obama's counterterrorism policy to that of Bush he has been inconsistent in fulfilling the commitments he promised.

As Gottlieb expresses that Bush was very clear about his stand on "terrorism as warfare" paradigm, unlike Obama who has created "criminal-justice-national security" (Gottlieb 2012: 126-127). Counterterrorism model which is based on providing

rhetoric in bringing about a change in policies from the previous administration and propagating the values of America by placing counterterrorism policies under the guidance of law, but at the same time continuing the war model similar to ones carried out by Bush. Torture was to be outlawed in interrogations of the terrorist suspects by the Obama administration but he has continued with the controversial rendition policy which interrogates and holds the suspected terrorist in other countries without due process with no information of torture if committed against a suspect. The promise of shutting the Guantanamo Bay facility has been thwarted by congress which has debated on the problem of lack of detention options especially when terrorism is likely to increase by ISIS efforts.

Assessment of U.S. Counterterrorism Policy Towards ISIS

Assessing the success rate of U.S. counterterrorism policy against ISIS shows that the significant gain has been in retrieving the territories from ISIS in Iraq and Syria (Figure 1) by U.S. led coalition air campaigns. When caliphate was declared by ISIS the territory under its control comprised roughly around one-third each of Iraq and Syria in 2014, with a control over the population of 9 million (Strack 2016). The report by a Defense think tank IHS Jane's 360 revealed that within two years of the declaration of the caliphate, the group lost 22% of the territory that they controlled initially. The groups advance in Palmyra and Ramadi in 2015 led to the loss of a large part of northern Syria especially the strategically important town of Tal Abyad which was the main border crossing between Turkey and caliphate's de-facto capital city of Raqqa. Apart from losing the strategic point of Tal Abyad and large swathes of eastern Syria the report found out that the group has also been struggling financially due to the loss of territories. There have been cuts in fighters salaries and cost of state-run services has increased. The increase of security on the Turkish side has curbed the flow of goods and recruits. The recent development has also allowed the Assad coalition forces to take back the territories from ISIS like Palmyra.

The air strikes conducted by U.S. led coalition have led to the killing of several high-level militants. One of the high-value targets was Haji Mutaaz a close deputy of al-Baghdadi in 2014, followed by many other leaders of ISIS. Starting from 2015 the militants killed in targeted killings has ranged from recruiters, leaders, planners, facilitators of both ISIS and Al-Nusra ranging around 40 members(Joshep 2016). The

death of Al-Qaduli in March 2016 who was one of the senior leaders which gave a sense of accomplishment to the U.S. officials, but the Brussels attack of March 2016 soon afterward killed 32 people and injured 300 by ISIS. This attack relegated the victory of killing high-value target to the background. The attack revealed the ability of ISIS to carry its global campaigns to other parts of the globe. The targeted killing has increased the hopes of the coalition but ISIS ability to replenish its ranks has to be taken into consideration before arriving at a conclusion. One of the military analyst from Institute for the Study of War has commented that the air strike is tactically spectacular but strategically irrelevant (Cohen and Brown 2016) and the targeted killing of ISIS leaders did not imply the immediate fall of the group.

In Iraq, the agenda for U.S. is to have an inclusive Iraqi government which would harm the recruiting appeal of ISIS and would discourage the Sunnis to join extremism. Prime Minister of Iraq Haider al-Abadi announced the desire of having a decentralized system of governance. But the prevailing situation of the sectarian divide among Sunni and Shias and the increasing role of Iran in supporting Shia militants, along with infighting between the Sunni tribals have taken a considerable time and effort to realize this vision. In Syria, the equation is complicated due to different parties fighting for power. The motivation of the militias have revealed the willingness to fight ISIS is lesser than fighting Assad's forces. The opposition groups in Syria is focused on removal of Assad but the irony is that even if Assad steps down it will make open up an opportunity for ISIS to take advantage of the political vacuum left by Assad. Given such calculations, Russia and Iran would not allow such an option from materializing due to its support for the Alawite regime which became evident when high-end weapon system was used against Assad's opposition. Iraqi and Kurdish forces have been able to gain back 40% territory from ISIS and 20% of Syrian territory. After the loss of territory ISIS has upped its intensity of operations in Iraq and Syria and beyond these two regions now ISIS has been concentrating violent attacks in Libya. The campaign led by coalition faced a setback despite an increase in expenditure by $500 million by the department of Defence (McInnis 2016). U.S. could not raise forces solely dedicated to fighting ISIS in Syria. There were attacks in western cities of Paris and Brussels by militants supported by ISIS which could not be avoided, killing 130 in Paris and 32 in Brussels, this showed the level of strategic reach of the group. This made Obama administration to react by sending a special

"additional expeditionary force" (Lamothe 2016) of 200 to carry out intelligence, and operations against ISIS leaders.

The flaws of the counterterrorism policy followed by Obama did not allow for a successful negotiation between Assad regime and the opposition. The diplomatic efforts of U.S. and other states have not been able to fully arrive at a unanimous decision. U.S. and its coalition partners have opted for Assad to step down but this decision is not agreeable to Russia and Iran who has been strong supporters of Assad regime. U.S. did not agree with the inclusion of some opposition which did not seem to be 'moderate' (DeYong 2015), backed by Saudi Arabia. The diplomatic efforts have not been without roadblocks due to the clash of self-interest and competition for regional domination by the major states in the Middle East. Despite the air attacks by the coalition ISIS lost territories but at the same time have gained in Iraq and Syria. The lack of coherent strategy has allowed ISIS to create a spill over effects in other countries like Libya, Afghanistan, Egypt, Nigeria. The ambition of training the local forces in Syria has not been successful enough. Without the political stabilization in Syria hopes of effectively countering ISIS is almost negligible. Involvement of Russia and Iran in Syria added another piece to the conflict that U.S. has to deal with. Russia's motive of avoiding International backing by U.S. to make him step down from power in Syria has been reflected in vetoing UNSC resolutions.

As expressed by Hoffman (2009) that U.S. counterterrorism policy has mostly been guided by "kill or capture" narrative which is a very narrow viewpoint and does not fully consider the different operational environments. The use of military power has been understood in U.S. to be the best strategy in successfully countering terrorism and insurgency without paying much attention to political, economic, social, and ideological activities. The terrorist groups that thrive in today's context are much more elusive and resilient to be defeated just by decapitation. Hoffman goes to prescribe that an integrated approach is required to deal with the problem which has operational durability and evolutionary, elusive character. Moving further ahead Hoffman goes on to argue that in addition to hard power capabilities of "kill or capture", and attrition the soft skills should also be harnessed like psychology, negotiation, social and cultural anthropology to deal with the adversaries which thrive in an ambiguous and dynamic environment. As U.S. has been battling terrorism longer than the World War II, and terrorism will persist due to its ambiguity of circumstances in which it evolves,

learning about the terrorist groups is very important in carrying out effective counterterrorism strategy.

Chapter 6

Regional Implications

The Middle East in Today's Global Context

The Middle East has once again become the epicenter of major conflict in the world. It began with the Arab Spring uprising which was supposed to be a revolution against despotic regimes, but it soon transformed into a violent conflict after it reached Syria. At present most of the countries in the region are highly unstable which are heading towards failed state like situations. The perpetration of violence and destruction has contributed to the weakening or collapse of governments in Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Yemen, and Lebanon. These countries are facing biggest threat from terrorism and sectarian violence.

Exacerbating the situation further, the powerful states in the region are competing for power by supporting and aligning with the proxies. The sectarian lines have been widened among the states and have led to regional competition for power among them. Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Turkey have sided with Sunni Islamist networks, on the other hand, Iran has supported Shia militias and Hezbollah. Before the Syrian crisis, this region was already mired in conflicts starting with Arab Spring which was the result of the rise of educated, unemployed youths whose aspirations didn't get fulfilled due to the control of arbitrary and kleptocratic leaders in states like Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Libya. When it reached Syria the revolution against the authoritarian regime of Assad got maimed into a civil war and ISIS struck at the right moment by infiltrating the territory. The turmoil created by ISIS with the addition of Syrian civil war presents a combination of problems, which has spilled out of the geographical borders of Syria and into other parts of the region. The conflagration of the conflict has not yet been able to be contained despite the involvement of U.S. and its coalition partners.

U.S. under Obama administration wanted renewed foreign policy goals in the Middle East region the priority area were mostly concerning with national security issues. The priority issues were Iran nuclear weapons program, ending the war in Iraq, Israel-Palestine peace process, and terrorism. The Middle East partners have been lacking the cohesion of views for solving a problem in the region. One of the commentators has argued that the threat of ISIS is recognized by the regional states but there is a lack of

co-ordination and co-operation in finding the long term solution. For example, there is no unanimity in restoring a type of government in Iraq or Syria and also there is disagreement in placing priority objective when it comes to either ouster of Assad or defeating ISIS. The sectarian divide between Sunnis and Shias has become a tug of war for dominance by Persians (Iran), Arabs (Saudi Arabia and Gulf states), Kurds and Ottomans (Turkey), Egypt in Yemen. The states affected by the conflict in Syria and ISIS have been in shambles with the loss of lives and infrastructure these countries require decades to come back to normalcy.

The skeptics argue that such factionalism in the Middle East is due to the policy of disengagement advocated by U.S. under Obama administration. U.S. has made its objective clear since its involvement in the Syrian conflict from August 2014 that it is looking for defeat and destruction of ISIS with the aim of resolving regional crises and for that matter have been garnering support from the regional allies. But the collective action is required by the regional states for any of the policies of U.S. to be workable. The regional states have been mistrustful of each other's motives and have hindered arriving at any fruitful decision. The Gulf Cooperation Council have been fragmented on several issues like the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen which had Oman missing from it and other partners were only symbolically present. The lackluster attitude of the regional allies has not helped in solving the crisis in Syria and Iraq. Lack of cooperation and engagement in fighting through proxies to secure self-interest will avoid arriving at a viable solution in the region. A Combination of issues persists in the Middle East ranging from disturbances in the balance of power to sectarian politics, adding to it ISIS threat, and militant extremism has made the region a source of violence.

Geo-Political Implications of U.S. Counterterrorism Policy against ISIS

The conflict in Syria has led to the involvement of regional and foreign states. The spillover effect in the neighboring countries has devolved the conflict into a proxy war controlled by regional and foreign entities. U.S. counterterrorism policy mandated the use for coalition forces which consists of several Western and Arab countries. Involving regional states for military measures to tackle ISIS has a direct consequence on these states, though the military intervention has been able to take several strongholds from Iraq and Syria. ISIS after facing the loss of territories has now

extended to other region and has established affiliates in places which already had an unstable government and vulnerable social structure like in Libya, Yemen, Lebanon. Due to the regional hostility and suspicion existing among the states it has instead of solving the conflict allowed the internationalization of the conflict. The effect of lack of cooperation has led to the increasing border insecurity and the rise of refugee flows, not only in the neighboring region but to other foreign countries. The sectarian divide characterizing the conflict has made different forces and groups in Syria and Iraq to side with different regional states and has increased the friction in the region.

The counterterrorism policy of U.S. against ISIS has not solely contributed to the existing state of affairs in the region surrounding Syria and Iraq rather it is also the leftover of Bush policies in Iraq that had its consequences and being felt currently in the Syrian conflict. For example, Iran got a chance to interfere in Iraq due o untimely withdrawal of U.S. troops giving a stronghold in Iraq. The direct military intervention of the external parties has increased as the conflict has escalated since 2014 providing support with operational capabilities to the warring sides. This will make an impact on the outcome of the conflict. But at the same time, the international and regional players who have contributed to military escalation have been pushing for a diplomatic solution to the conflict making it a contradictory plan for solving the problem.

Turkey:

The main issue that concerns Turkey is the role of Kurds who have been fighting against ISIS forces in Syria and Iraq as an important ally for U.S.U.S. considers Kurds and its associated militia organization People's Protection Unit or YPG as an important partner in its counterterrorism policy. Due to the role of Turkey as the key regional player in the conflict in Syria, it has to deal with the major chunk of problems erupting from the conflict. These problems faced by Turkey are wide ranging from refugee issues to security and economic issues. Most importantly Turkey has its own internal problems related to Kurdish secessionist movement. The Kurds fighters have gained prominence in the fight against ISIS and have been favored by U.S. for its ability to fight ISIS which is seen to be problematic for Turkey.

Since 1980s Turkey has been suppressing the separatist insurgency and urban terrorism perpetrated by the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK).The Kurds have been trying for secessionist claims from Turkey since the foundation of the republic. Turkey

has been harsh in quelling the Kurdish identity, it has committed human rights abuses against the ethnic Kurds (Zanotti 2016) for their suspected involvement in PKK. The Kurds in Iraq and Syria have been sharing similar kind of secessionist tendencies which was subdued by the state authority. PKK has amicable relations with Democratic Union Party (PYD) which emerged as the umbrella group for the Syrian Kurds.

PYD got hold of swathes of territory in Syria bordering Turkey which has been disturbing for Turkey because of the likelihood of Kurds in Turkey renewing its secessionist demands which they have been trying for years now. The Kurds in Iraq has Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) which controls territories in northern Iraq and it assists PKK in staging attacks against the Turkish government and it also have been used as a safe haven. Turkey views organizations like PYD and other Kurdish parties as the extension of PKK which is a listed terrorist organization by U.S. PYD's militia wing called YPG has been an active partner in counterterrorism policy of U.S. against ISIS. YPG is the ground force in Syria that U.S. has been relying on to push back ISIS and it has successfully recovered areas from ISIS at the same time consolidated its territorial hold.

The control of territory by Kurds in Syria and Iraq will determine how the Kurds of Turkey will react to such possible prospects of greater autonomy and independence that will influence their relation with the Turkish government. Turkey's demand on U.S. for outlawing PYD and YPG was not paid much attention (Idiz 2015) because PYD is aligned with U.S. to fight ISIS and also PKK has been fighting along with PYD which made Turkey have a confusing relations with U.S. Turkey views that U.S. sympathises with the Syrian Kurds after knowing its alliance with PKK which is a listed terrorist organisation. The annoyance of Turkey on U.S. regarding the Kurdish forces was highlighted when Turkey fired at PKK strongholds in Northern Iraq and media reports show that Turkey made more than hundred strikes (Bertrand 2015) on Kurdish forces in comparison killing 400 Kurdish militant and just 9 ISIS militants. The Syrian Kurds instead of being an effective ground alley in pushing back the ISIS hold from Syrian territories were not included in Syrian peace talks (Ghitis 2016) due to the reluctance of Turkey in inviting YPG.

The cease-fire called by PKK ended in July 2015 due to the targeted bombings on PKK in Northern Iraq strongholds. The violence escalated in Turkey itself resulting in hundreds of casualties and arrest of terrorist suspects in south-eastern Turkey. The violence might affect the internal stability of Turkey and open up another conflict as the Kurds in Turkey aims at gaining independence from Turkey.

The outcome of alliance with YPG has been a strategically sound decision made by U.S., it reclaimed 11 villages from ISIS (Youseff 2015) in Syria and a major town of Kobani. YPG was able to give a blow to ISIS by recapturing the town of Tal Abyad which allowed cutting down of the main supply lines. U.S. saw the capability of the Kurdish forces in fighting ISIS it accounts about five thousand of them and have been provided with training for taking charge of operations on the ground against ISIS. But the problem is the disliking of Turkey and the other Arab States to see emboldened Kurdish fighters.

U.S. and Turkey have maintained a strategic bilateral relationship in the past, with Turkey projecting itself as Muslim Democratic state with a strong economy and a member of NATO. These aspects make Turkey an important player in the region with a backing of the Western countries but the developments leading to ISIS and U.S. policy in containing it has transformed the bilateral relation to a certain extent. Turkey decided to join the coalition with U.S. to fight ISIS and support the ouster of Assad regime and allowed its airspace for anti-ISIS aerial attacks in Iraq and Syria. In August 2015 Turkey allowed U.S. to use its air base Incirlik and cooperated in joint air operations against ISIS. But very soon Turkey resumed hostilities with PKK, especially after the takeover of Kobane in Syria by YPG. Some view that Turkey got more interested in containing Kurdish forces rather than countering ISIS and curbing extremism on its border (Coskun and Afanasieva 2015). Turkey and other Arab Gulf states gave an alternative of using opposition Islamist forces instead of Kurdish forces like YPG or PYD which is not acceptable by U.S. and on the other hand Turkey condemns the advance of Kurdish hold close to its borders.

Iran:

One of the effects of U.S. counterterrorism policies in the region has allowed Iran to pursue a powerful stand and gain regional supremacy. Iran views itself as a major power with a responsibility of protecting the minority Shias. The coming of ISIS

created a major threat for Tehran and increased the danger of sharing a border once again with an adversary who aimed at destroying the Shias and build a caliphate comprising of Arab Sunnis in the region.

Iran allied with Assad who is a long time ally belonging to Alawite sect which is an offshoot of Shia Islam. The attempt by Iran is to have a 'Shia crescent' (Joobani and Mousavipour 2015) against the Sunni rivals in the region, along with its interest in securing the land route to its Lebanese proxy Hezbollah. Against this backdrop, Iran decided to supply arms to Lebanon due to the threat posed by ISIS. Assad regime got strength with the help from Iran and provided its Revolutionary Guard Corps to advise him. Given the hostile relation with U.S. Iran has finally found a point of sharing similar goals with U.S. i.e. the destruction of ISIS. This has changed the landscape of bilateral relation between the two countries.

The relationship of Iran with Iraq is of utmost significance mostly due to the presence of Shias which comprises of 60-70% of the population, making Iraq as the most Shia populated after Iran itself. After the revolution of 1979, the Arab Sunni states got threatened by the emerging Shia revolution and along with it Iran lost the backing of the West. Iraq attacked Iran which was isolated by its previous allies, and the war continued for eight years. In such a scenario Iran wanted to have weightage in the region by securing the interests of the Shias in the Middle East by building a strong military and pursuing the nuclear weapons program. After the government of Nouri al-Maliki was installed in Iraq, Iran got a support from the Shia dominated government and by 2010 both the countries signed more than 100 cooperation agreements (Esfandiary and Tabatabai 2015). Baghdad became reliant on Iran due to the fear of prevalence of strong Sunni faction in Iraq. The shared fear made Tehran and Baghdad to develop closer ties after a prolonged hostility since the Iranian revolution.

The advance of ISIS in Iraq made Iran revise some of its established stand regarding U.S. Previously Iran condemned the U.S. invasion of Iraq but after July 2014 Iran became less critical of U.S. involvement in the conflict. The willingness of Iran in fighting terrorism made the views of Tehran and Washington come at a similar level if not opening of friendly relations, cooperation for this issue looked possible (Mekhennet 2014).

The relation of U.S. with Iran has been mired by skepticism since the starting of the Iranian revolution. U.S. has struggled to stop Iran from developing its nuclear weapons program. Obama administration efforts created the P5+1 group to successfully curtail Iran nuclear weapons ambition. Iran nuclear weapons program posed a threat to U.S. and for global security, Obama administration's main priority was the security issues in the Middle East and Iran's nuclear deal topped its list. The lifting of sanctions on Iran and its cooperation regarding the nuclear deal agreement opened up renewed relations with the West. The critics of the deal have viewed the nuclear deal with Iran as a precursor of making Iran as a regional hegemon (Lynch 2015). The fear that critics emphasize is that the nuclear deal will give legitimacy to Iran to have hegemonic aspirations in the region with its backing by U.S. and opening up of diplomatic links.

There has been a convergence of interests between Iran and U.S. on various issues regarding countering ISIS, avoiding division of Iraq between Shia, Sunnis and Kurds, and avoiding sectarian war. Although the interests are not completely aligning with the conflict, for example, Iran has supported Assad regime with its military backing and Hezbollah as its chief ground forces (DeYoung and Warrick 2015) which has hampered the counterterrorism policy of U.S. Iran's strategy according to one of the official is to support the Assad regime but in any case of its collapse Iran backing of the militias in Syria will be a safety option. Nevertheless, ISIS threat has made both U.S. and Iran to have the same interest of defeating ISIS. This policy pursuance by Iran has made U.S. include Iran in its counterterrorism policy and this has led to the transformation of relations between the two countries.

Iran can pursue its hegemonic aspirations in the region in future as it has links with Shia militias and Hezbollah who are more effective than the Iraqi armed forces. The lifting of economic sanctions on Iran has created bright economic prospects for Iran, several European countries want to return to the Iranian markets and export its energy sources. China views Iran as a counter to U.S. influence in the Middle East (Nader 2015) and a potential geopolitical partner. Engaging in Iraq will give Iran to decrease its isolation which it suffers regionally and increase its influence in the region by aligning with the global powers. But full cooperation with U.S. is troublesome due to the pressures from traditional allies like Saudi Arabia and Israel.

Saudi Arabia:

The major area of concern for Saudi Arabia in countering ISIS threat is related with growing relationship between U.S. and Iran. The Saudi debate is surrounded by the role of Iran in the regional conflict and its nuclear weapons program. Saudi Arabia views that Iran follows an expansionist policy with a sectarian agenda which is meant to embolden Shias and undermine the role of Sunnis in the Middle East. With the starting of the Syrian conflict, the animosity with Iran has flared up. Saudi Arabia is critical of Iran's backing of Assad regime and hence it fully supported the military intervention by the U.S. But as the situation unfolded in the Syrian crisis, Saudi Arabia has become skeptical of the opening of the relation between U.S. and Iran and the settlement of the nuclear deal. The nuclear deal has allowed U.S. to recognize Iran's military role in containing ISIS but it does not mean a rapprochement as Saudi has viewed it to be. Due to the existence of decades-long antagonism between U.S. and Iran, it will take several years for them to develop a healthy strategic relationship which is not even preordained.

If Iran is the protector of Shias in the region then Saudi Arabia sees itself as the protector of Sunnis. Both the countries have been involved in the two opposing camps and have strategic differences going back to the 14th-century rivalry. Not only that both Iran and Saudi Arabia has religious and ideological differences. Saudi views itself as the key Sunni power in the region and has been supporting and funding Salafist extremist groups with some of them having links with radical Sunni groups residing in Iran. The major security concern for Saudi Arabia is the threat from ISIS in the north, Iran in the east and Shia rebels and resurgent Al-Qaeda in Yemen. But the immediate threat comes from Al-Qaeda and ISIS which has already staged attacks in the kingdom. With the intervention of U.S. in defeating ISIS Iran has been cooperative with the West to tackle ISIS for the need of having a secure environment in the region. Saudi Arabia has seen to be more worried about Iran's rising role in the region rather than the threat posed by ISIS. For example, in Yemen, the military operation was conducted precipitously without any clear goals (Wittes 2015), but it unified the Arab Sunni States more than it unified them to fight against ISIS.

Saudi Arabia is one of the important allies of U.S. in the Middle East but after the 9/11 incident, the relationship between the two got strained due to the involvement of the

attackers who has Saudi Arabian nationality. Since the conflagration of Syrian conflict the Obama administration got support by the Saudi in ousting Assad and defeat ISIS, but as one official has expressed that the Gulf Cooperation Council headed by Saudi Arabia half-heartedly supported the fight against ISIS (PBS Newshour 2016). Saudi gave support to U.S. led coalition in 2014 with air strikes but as the conflict progressed and saw the assertive Iranian role in the region the air strikes were diverted from Iran and Syria to Yemen where it is fighting its proxy war by supporting the group which is in opposition to Iranian-backed Houthi rebels.

Saudi Arabia is critical of U.S. for not deploying boots on the ground to oust Assad and also not curbing Iran for its activities in the Saudi backyard. Saudi announced the forming of a military coalition with 34 Muslim-majority states (Jenkins 2016). But the forming of a military alliance to curb ISIS and Islamic extremism by Saudi Arabia is seen with skepticism by some westerners as an effort to impose their brand of Islamic law which had much of the ideological roots of Islamic extremism. In January 2016 Saudi Arabia carried out the execution of terrorist suspects along with a Shia cleric having close links with Hezbollah al-Heja an Iranian-sponsored group. The action on Saudi Arabia's part has made U.S. critical about its role in the region, with assertive Saudi monarch due to which U.S. will find it difficult to maintain a close relationship with Riyadh. Adding to the straining relations with Saudi Arabia U.S. created a bill and passed by Senate "Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act" (JASTA) (Zengerle 2016) which removes the sovereign immunity of the countries engaged in committing acts of terrorism on U.S. soil, by allowing the families of the victims to seek damages from those countries. The bill is directed against Saudi Arabia due to the origins of perpetrators 9/11 attacks from the country, which Saudi authority denies. The intervention by U.S. in Syria has led to the change in existing alliance with old partners like Saudi Arabia adding much to its consternation as the conflict increases.

Israel:

Israel faces a security threat from the ongoing conflict in Syria besides its long decades of the Palestinian issue. One of the major issues that concern Israel is the U.S. related counterterrorism policy that has allowed Iran its regional adversary to find a close relationship with U.S. to fight ISIS. The diplomacy pursued by U.S. towards Iran raised anxiety in Israel. The Arab nations pose a threat to Israel and it has relied on

U.S. for showing its strength by having military superiority in the region. The change in political atmosphere in the region has influenced Israel security and made it vulnerable to the rising threats from growing Islamic terrorism in the form of ISIS and increasing assertive role played by Iran which was fomented by its nuclear weapons program.

The security threat from ISIS reached till its borders in Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Egypt, and Libya. The flow of refugees, terrorism close to its borders has added up to the existing problems with anti-Israel narratives in the region, undermining the security of Israel. The weakening of Assad regime is an advantage to Israel since the two countries have been in a state of war, but the coming of ISIS created a possibility of attacks. Due to the rise of Islamic radicalism and its propagation by ISIS, there is intensifying of anti-Israel and anti-Semitism in West bank and Gaza.

Israel is disturbed about the situation in Jordan which is facing economic issues. As Jordan is an important ally of Israel in the Middle East Israel views stability of Jordanian government as its own national interest, and the worsening economic situation and flow of refugees in the kingdom has been threatening to Israel. For securing its region Israel decided to built a wall (Peled 2015) along the border of Jordan to avoid the militias from entering. The direct threat from ISIS comes from the situation in Egypt's Sinai which has an ISIS-affiliated group with a military capability and strategy and its expanding control of the Sinai province. Sinai poses a threat to Israel which plans to carry out an attack in Southern Israel (Jerusalem Post 2016). The government led by Hamas in Gaza is not so popular due to its worsening humanitarian situation and rising taxes, this has affected its relation with Salafi-jihadist groups in Gaza. These groups have been supportive of ISIS and have challenged Hamas government, due to which the relation has not been amicable between them.

Israel has participated minimally in the conflict brewing in Syria and Iraq. The only time when Israel has carried out an airstrike in Syria was due to the fear of weapons being transferred to Hezbollah and used for aiding Assad in Syria (Zanotti 2015). Hezbollah poses a big threat to Israel which had undermined its military capability 2006 Israel-Lebanon war.

Regarding Iran, Israel viewed its nuclear program to be an imminent threat. Israel views that Iran will have an assertive role in the region and even though it does not

make nuclear weapons its capability to do so will solely increase the potential cost for Israel in deterring Iran and its allies like Hezbollah. In turn, this will allow intimidation in the region leading to a greater nuclear proliferation in the region (Naji 2016). After the settling of the nuclear deal with Iran, the prospects of opening up of ties with U.S. has been seen damaging by Israel. It has been critical of the nuclear deal which has lifted economic sanctions from Iran. Prime Minister Netanyahu viewed that such an advantage for Iran will make it an economic powerhouse bolstering its power in the region making Iran act aggressively in the region.

In the counterterrorism efforts led by U.S. Israel has been providing mostly with intelligence support against ISIS. But the escalating nature of the conflict and extension of ISIS in regions other than Iraq and Syria has created a complicated web of circumstances. The increase of ISIS abilities and not very successful military campaign by the coalition against it has made U.S. purse options which will help in containing ISIS. Making a softer stance on Iran regarding the nuclear issue has created consternation to its traditional allies like Israel and Saudi Arabia. Iran is most affected by ISIS threat than any other Sunni Arab countries. Iran has been viewed by U.S. as the only determined regional actor to contain ISIS. This situation has impacted the relations among the states in the Middle East and with U.S.

Involvement of Russia and Its Impact in the Region

U.S. counterterrorism policy has not defeated ISIS although it is too early to judge the effectiveness of U.S. counterterrorism policy. But from its inception since 2014 airstrikes it left Assad in a poor state and Russia got involved at the time to help Assad regain its strength. Russia got involved in Syria to support Assad regime with whom it had a good relation since the time of cold war. Syria under Assad is one of the few remaining political partner in the Middle East, which purchases weapons from Kremlin and in turn Syria gives Russia access to the Mediterranean Sea.

Although the main reason stated by Russia in UNSC for its military campaign in Syria was building of anti-ISIS alliance. But in reality, it assisted Assad regime against U.S. led coalition. Russia differed in its strategic priorities in Syria compared to U.S. which wanted Assad to step down from power as a solution to resolving the civil war and minimize the dangers posed by ISIS. The difference was visible when Russian military targeted not just the terrorists but also Assad's moderate oppositions. The U.S.

officials stated that the 90% (The Guardian 2015) of airstrikes by Russia has not aimed ISIS targets. Rather Russia targeted legitimate oppositions which it denied.

Russia has its presence in the Middle East from the beginning and has maintained relations with isolated Middle East countries which were under economic sanctions by the west. Due to the potential markets where it could earn profits without much competition from other Western countries. For example, Russia tried diplomatic efforts in Iraq to advocate friendly relation with Saddam Hussein regime during the 1990s and in 2003 with the aim of getting its business deals preferred by the regime especially its oil and gas exploration after the lifting of sanctions (Dannreuther 2012). The economic interests of Russia lie in the fact that it is an exporter of arms to Iran, Syria, and Libya. Russia has not opposed Iran for its nuclear program despite pressure from U.S. It has supported Iran by arguing that the nuclear program would be under the vigilance of IAEA and it would be responsible for the disposal of spent fuel.

Regarding Turkey, Russia has a tensed bilateral relation due to the perceptions of one another. Turkey saw the post-Soviet developments as a liberation struggle and Russia viewed Turkey to have a desire to create a pan-Turkic nation. Turkey was given greater importance by U.S. and including it in NATO and aligning with it. Both the countries fought the conflict in a proxy with Russia supporting the Kurds and Turkey supporting the Chechens. The tension increased between Turkey and Russia following the downing of Russian fighter jet by Turkey while carrying out operations against ISIS . This incident made Russia put economic sanctions against Turkey (Sonawane 2016). The conflict in Syria has allowed Russia and Turkey to bring out their personal differences and allowed for the prevalence of a tensed atmosphere. With media reports speculating that the escalation of hostility between the two states would induce the NATO countries including U.S. to stand against Russia under its collective defense principle.

Russia backed Assad regime and increased its involvement by deploying air force in Latakia region of Syria. Since its commencement of air strikes starting from September 2015 Russia helped Syria with air support as well as ground operations to the State forces and its supporting militias. The air strikes were directed against Al-Qaeda and its affiliate al-Nusra along with some of its allies and ISIS.

The air strikes attacked anti-government forces in the northwest region initially and were successful in destroying ISIS important centers like command and control, logistical support in Ar Raqqah, Homs, Dar az-Zawr. U.S. became critical of Russian involvement in Syria, due to its support of Assad regime and attacking non ISIS targets especially in Alleppo (Karimi and Melvin 2016) which had mainly Assad oppositions and blamed Russia for cutting out the food and aid supplies to the civilians. The tension between Russia and U.S. started with the Ukranian crisis and it grew with Russian involvement in the conflict. Although Russia announced to pull out from Syria in March 2016 but it did not fully withdraw its forces from the Syrian territory.

Escalation of Proxy Wars in the Region

The Middle East has been mired with proxy battles starting from the Syrian civil war. The conflict in Syria has led not only the involvement of several regional and foreign powers but it has allowed the states to play out their animosity through the proxy wars. Proxy war allows the understanding of the conflict in the traditional cold war sense where the external states employ means to influence the behavior of the adversary state. The only difference in the current understanding of proxy war waging in the Middle East is the involvement of state and non-state actors in the conflict (Cragin 2015). Al-Qaeda has been waging a proxy battle against ISIS in Syria by its support to Nusra front.Cragin views that the theaters in Syria have developed a ground for Al-Qaeda to maintain its credibility to sustain the jihadi movement in its own terms against ISIS through supporting al-Nusra.

The use of Kurds as the ground forces to fight ISIS and avoidance of its military in Syria shows the tendency of relying on military and Para-military proxies since the end of cold war. The policy undertaken by U.S. and supported by the coalition in the Middle East region with the emergence of ISIS and Syrian civil war shows a shift in capabilities away from military combat and solving the problem in the region with the use of local proxies. One author argues that the trend in using such method is the result of the coming of a global order with an absence of sole superpower and establishment of multiple actors. Brown (2016) has used the term "polyarchic" in which the global power system is decentralized, interdependent comprising of state and non-state actors. The use of proxies entails that that the volatility of the relationships existing

between states and non-states and fickle relationships that today's enemy might be partner tomorrow. These uncertainties have made U.S. and Western powers reluctant in using their army and instead have opted for exploring the option of using local proxies to fight against an adversary.

Yemen:

In Yemen, the problem between Houthi rebels and President Hadi has almost put the country on the verge of a civil war. The crisis in Yemen has a major implication for the region and its security. Houthis belonging to the Shia sect is supported by Iran, and the government of Hadi backed by Saudi Arabia. The Houthis belong to the minority Shia striving for a greater autonomy for their Saada province and greater access to resources which had been denied by the Yemeni government. The crisis between Houthi and Yemen government is seen as a part of the wider regional struggle between Iran and Saudi Arabia. The changing nature of the conflict into a sectarian war in Yemen has made Iran and Saudi Arabia play their proxies. Saudi Arabia formed a coalition of Gulf Arab States comprising Jordan, Egypt, Sudan, Bahrain, UAE, Kuwait, Qatar and Morocco which launched air strikes to defeat Houthi rebels who are allegedly aided and supported by Iran.

Houthis have got international backing from Iran reportedly with weapons and finances. The involvement of Iran in Yemen made Saudi Arabia to view Houthi as an Iranian proxy, the Yemen government accused Hezbollah of aiding Houthis. Iran and Houthis have similar geopolitical interests, with both opposed to Saudi backing of the elected government of Hadi. Saudi Arabia feels that the loss of Saana will lead to the ascendancy of Iran as a regional hegemon. The already existing conflict between Houthi and the government forces in Yemen got fomented by the addition of Al-Qaeda in Arabian Penninsula (AQAP) and ISIS. The problem in Yemen has wider regional implications not only due to the involvement of Iran and Saudi Arabia but also the strategic location of Yemen which is situated at Bab al-Mandab Strait an important waterway through which most of the oil shipments pass (BBC 2015). The Gulf countries are worried that the Houthi stronghold will pose a threat to the route. AQAP is seen as one of the strongest affiliates of Al-Qaeda with an expertise of global reach.

Increasing extremism in Yemen with the capture of a city by AQAP (Laube 2016) and establishing of ISIS affiliate in Yemen made U.S. carry out the military air strike. AQAP released around three hundred inmates from prison and started to expand westward. The ISIS affiliate orchestrated suicide attacks in two Zayidi Houthi mosques killing 140 people in March 2016. The Saudi-led coalition air strikes led to many civilian casualties, UN estimated that 60% of the civilian casualties comes from the coalition strike. The situation in Yemen has made the region very unstable with unending competition for power involving terrorist groups to regional powers.

Libya:

The expansion of ISIS in Libya will lead to a destabilizing effect in Northern Africa with increasing threat to Southern Europe. Qatar and UAE have been engaged in a proxy war in Libya. Since the fall of Ghadafi, the central structure of Libya weakened and became a battleground for the competing powers. Qatar backs the Islamist-led government of Muslim brotherhood and UAE backs the UN-recognized government of Torbuk. UAE has been investing in countering Muslim Brotherhood whereas Qatar has been financing the spread of Muslim Brotherhood. The proxy war waged by Doha and Abu Dhabi shows the weakness of Gulf Cooperation Council which is a decisive factor in bringing out the political order in Libya. UAE have been providing arms to Libyan militias (Cafiero and Wagner 2015) in order to counter the alleged Qatari sponsoring of some Islamist groups.

As the situation in Libya moves towards a failed state paradigm ISIS aims at expanding its control in such destabilized places. ISIS had planned on taking over Libya in 2014 and since then the attacks is on the rise. The lack of strong central government in Libya and the conflicting attitudes of UAE and Qatar has been responsible for the thriving of ISIS. ISIS has already been thought of controlling 150 Km of coastline region (Chandler 2016) and there has been an increase in the number of ISIS fighters to more than six thousand. Libya is the only place outside Iraq and Syria with its territory controlled by ISIS. Even though ISIS may fail to control vast territory in Libya it has a wider security threat in the region. It can open up links for operating in North Africa and exporting of militants in the region. The proximity of Libya to Europe will increase the possibilities of greater attacks and the presence of vast oil reserves in Libya can be a lucrative target for ISIS.

Humanitarian and Refugee crisis

More than 200,000 Syrians have died since the start of civil war in Syria. There are more than 4.7 million (Mercy Corps 2016) refugees and 7 million internally displaced people. This is the biggest humanitarian crisis which has internationalized the conflict. The flow of refugees to other neighboring states and to European countries is the chain reaction to the unending conflict in Iraq and Syria. The regional capacity to take refugees is limited with 2million refugees alone have been absorbed by Jordan and Lebanon (Jenkins 2015). Turkey is the only country in the region to absorb the largest number of refugees followed by Iraq, Egypt, Jordan, and Lebanon. The influx of the Syrian refugees in the neighboring countries and growing flow to other regions of the world has raised an alarm and presents the dangers of international instability and friction with countries making stricter immigration policies and disbanding refugees.

The civilian casualties in Iraq have increased since the takeover of territories in Iraq by ISIS in 2014. The statistics show that there was a dramatic increase in civilian deaths in 2014 to 20,000 from 9,845 in 2013 (Iraq bodycount 2016). The advance of ISIS in Iraq made the conflict worse and the majority of civilian death is attributed to ISIS. In the Iraqi territory ruled by ISIS, there have been reports of subjugating of 3,500 (CNN 2016) women and children to sexual slavery mostly from Yazidi and other minority communities. ISIS has engaged in ethnic cleansing of minorities and heinous techniques for prosecution like bulldozing, burning alive, amputation, throwing people off the building, gruesome beheadings.

The destruction of lives and property is immense in Syria and Iraq. The air strikes led by U.S. and coalition partners have also contributed to the civilian casualty. Although Pentagon has admitted minimal civilian casualty by its air strikes of only six people but the airstrikes have killed hundreds as reported by an independent monitoring group called Airwars, it has maintained a database of the civilian casualties by the coalition airstrikes since 2014, and it shows that the reported civilian killed is close to 1000.

In Yemen, there have been about 6000 civilians (Al jazeera 2016) deaths since the coalition led by Saudi Arabia started with air strikes against the Houthi rebels since March 2015. The majority of the death is due to the Saudi coalition strike in Yemen, affecting around 7 million people with a severe food crisis. In Lebanon and Jordan, the refugees are have been flowing from Syria. In Northern Iraq, the Syrians who have

escaped have been trapped in Iraqi insurgency conflict. The flow of refugees from Syria in these places is already creating a burden in the existing demolished economy and infrastructure. In Jordan, according to a World Bank report, the influx of refugees have strained the public services affecting the livelihood of the Jordanians. Lebanon has been severely strained by the flow of refugees, already the country has been mired by the sectarian tensions, the public amenities like hospitals, electricity, transportation has been critically affected.

The refugees from Syria have been crossing the Mediterranean Sea and many have lost their lives while trying to cross the sea to reach Europe via Turkey. Germany has hosted the majority of the refugees and received the highest number of the asylum application. Apart from Germany Hungary, Sweden, Austria has received the largest number of refugees from Syria. The movement of refugees has triggered a migrant crisis in Europe. The internally displaced people are at a major risk of suffering from human rights violation of all nature including slavery and torture and are more vulnerable than the Syrians fleeing the country as they do not get the rights enjoyed by a refugee. The challenges faced by the internally displaced person are attacks from government forces, violence from terrorist groups, lack of food and aid supplies, inaccessibility by the external help making them the worst affected in a conflict.

Turkey has been hosting the largest number of refugees from Syria but lately the Syrians have been leaving Turkey and crossing the Mediterranean Sea to reach Europe. One of the main reason for Syrians to leave Turkey is the conflict of Syrians with the natives (Yazgan et al. 2015). The Syrians trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea has met with human tragedies this has made the policy makers and countries at large discuss the humanitarian aspect of the refugee question and emphasize on the collective responsibility in addressing the refugee crisis.

The conflicts in the Middle East region has contributed to the displacement of the population due to the prosecution, and violence and on an unprecedented level. The crisis has made Syria the world's largest source of refugees. Resolving of the crisis in Syria is unlikely in the near future, which will lead to a greater flow of refugees and asylum seekers to other countries. The UN general- secretary Ban-Ki-Moon has stated that the humanitarian crisis in Syria has lost the equivalent of four decades of human development (The Economist 2015). ISIS has destroyed the cultural heritage of Syria

in Palmyra and has used chemical agent like chlorine on civilians and continue to control the people in Syria with heinous crimes.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

Terrorism continues to have its existence as the world progresses and will get modified and evolve further. The existing religious wave will come to an end being replaced with another wave. After 9/11 terrorism was constructed to be more lethal than the previous form of violence. The new terrorism aimed at complete destruction, which was indiscriminate, omnipresent, and totalitarian, it wanted total war with no regard to conventions, laws or norms. Terrorism turned from 'theatre' to 'slaughter' (Ditrych 2014: 117). Religion became the core of new terrorism with Islam as the main driver for constructing a world mired by conflicts between the believers and infidels. The objective of terrorists came to be understood in eschatological terms. Terrorism is the weapon used as a means to fulfill the higher end and groups like Al-Qaeda and ISIS have ends which have apocalyptic vision of world domination sanctioned by the will of God. Both the groups emerged in ruptured society and lack of governing institutions. Al-Qaeda was born in war tarnished Afghanistan with Salafi -jihadism as its core ideology, whereas ISIS was born in conflict-ridden Iraq from the offshoot of Al-Qaeda franchise in Iraq incorporating savagery and total war as its method.

The U.S. counterterrorism policy continues to evolve and it got a concrete shape especially after 9/11 terror attacks. The 'war on terror' discourse became synonymous with U.S. counterterrorism policy. It came to include a high-end strategy to bring its perpetrators to justice. The war on terror followed coercion approach of counterterrorism and included six dimensions to defeat Al-Qaeda which included punishment, decapitation strikes, denial of sanctuary, an increase in homeland security, countering extremism, and building partnership capacity.

The birth of ISIS can be predated to Cold War period starting from the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union. In the tug of war between the two power blocs, U.S. made use of the Mujahideen soldiers to defeat communist forces and didn't realize the fundamentalism that would contribute to the making of Al-Qaeda and later the same

brand of fundamentalism which created ISIS. This became the starting point for U.S. in making a mistake in using fundamentalism and jihadi orientation in defeating the enemy.

The counterterrorism policy has mixed results and yielded both progress and setbacks. Based on the analysis of U.S. counterterrorism efforts after 9/11 it can pointed out that the rise in terrorism and sectarian violence can be contributed due to some of the faulty U.S. policies in Afghanistan and Iraq.

- The invasion of Afghanistan led to the disruption of Al-Qaeda bases but its ideology remained intact, its resurgence in 2002 proved that it was not defeated rather it got an opening to move into Iraq (due to the U.S. invasion of Iraq) where AQI was formed which became the forerunner of ISIS.

- U.S. supported the opposition of Saddam's Baath party by giving an advantageous position to Shia and Kurds, this altered the power structure in Iraq by giving Shias maximum representation in the government structure. This fomented the sectarian violence in Iraq which got increased after ISIS began prosecuting the Shias.

- The famously known "de-baathification" process initiated by U.S. led to the exclusion of Baath party members from employment which isolated the Sunni population driving them into an insurgency in Iraq.

- The U.S. diplomats have demonized Baath Party members who were mostly belonging to Sunni sect and took measures to isolate them, on the other hand, U.S. gave support to Shias due to the marginalization it had to face under Saddam's rule.

Islamist terrorism rejects the idea of a modern state and the secular laws which form an important part of western civilization. ISIS intends to create a caliphate governed by the Sharia to realize the will of the god which is ideally not an ill will. But the problem with this kind of order is the goal itself which has very little chance of survival. Given in the history of religious terrorism for instance Muslim Brotherhood could not succeed in forming a government based on Sharia model. In places where

Islamist got success like in Afghanistan, Sudan peace was not restored in the society with persecution becoming the most used weapon of such a government.

ISIS has well structured hierarchy and decision-making bodies due to which it has been able to conduct a successful military campaign which seems unstoppable by the coalition forces led by U.S. But its major objective of establishing a caliphate and world domination seems unrealistic. There are major blockades for ISIS in realizing this goal. First ISIS demands submission from Muslims all over the world, the problem with this thinking is that all the Muslim population of the world doesn't comply to ISIS ideology and prophecy, it has created bitter conflict between the two sects Shia and Sunni in the Islamic world. Secondly, there are powerful Islamic nations like Saudi Arabia, Iran which cannot be toppled down by ISIS due to their superior defense system compared to ISIS. Thirdly, the democratic liberal states headed by U.S. will be the biggest threat for ISIS and can never succeed in defeating them. Fourthly, any regime ruled by violence will suffer downfall very quickly, and history has proven this point where the powerful regimes like that of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy used prosecution and terror to get legitimacy can never survive for a longer period. ISIS will also face the same fate if at all it manages to proclaim a caliphate.

One of the strengths of ISIS is its ability to export its ideology in influencing people in other countries, on this front ISIS has got the maximum success. ISIS inspired attacks world over has shown the global outreach of its radical ideology. There has been ISIS inspired attacks in 22 countries excluding Syria from 2014 to June 2016 (CNN 2016). The perpetrators of terror attacks have pledged allegiance to ISIS with no direct planning and execution from the group. Such attacks have taken place in Europe, and U.S. resulting in deaths of hundreds through mass shootings, suicide bombings. Such a spread of radical jihadism globally is one of the gravest threat extremely difficult to curb because the movements of ideas cannot be barred in today's globalized world.

ISIS has developed strong communication channels to spread their tentacles of jihad by carrying out online propaganda and recruitment. It has used the modern technological communications to propagate their medieval ideology by using symbols

of popular culture and western ideas to lure and radicalize youths especially in the western world. The online propaganda has brought success to ISIS in recruiting fighters from around 90 countries which is why this type of terrorism has been unprecedented in the history. The Muslims living in the western country have been psychologically primed to the idea of caliphate and ISIS took full advantage through online propaganda. Even though ultimately ISIS will loose its ground the radicalisation process of the youths all over the world will contribute in bringing about another chapter in the future of religious terrorism.

Since the modern terrorism began with the religious wave since the 1970s, the terrorists have used globalization and fruits of modern progress as a tool to achieve their ends which are opposite to modernity and progression. The network of a terrorist group is sustained by the modern techniques and infrastructure provided by new global institutions. Whether it is sophisticated weapons, WMD, social media, finances, logistical support, religious terrorist groups like Al-Qaeda and ISIS have exploited these things to the fullest. The modern day jihadist terrorist are from western educated backgrounds like engineering and medicine most of them are extremely wealthy and are familiar with western civilization and the benefits it offers. The radicalized Muslims are the products of the globalized system in today's world. But globalization also brought socio-economic disruption in those countries which differed from western societies, it was seen as an imposition of alien socio-economic aspects and loss of sovereignty by its critics in Muslim states. Hence globalization has offered the militant Islam to undo the imposition of globalized ways by using it as a weapon to prosecute the will of God.

The supporter of ISIS view conflicts in a different light, engaging in a conflict is not understood in military terms but in theological terms. The war waged by religious terrorism is understood in a cosmic sense, which will eventually be won even if not in the near future. Viewing religious terrorism from a political and military angle is not enough in understanding religious terrorism. Using retaliatory strikes against religious terrorism has not seemed to work while it increases the support from their community when any retaliatory act is committed. U.S. reacted with force against Al-Qaeda after 9/11 and the consequences were the prolonged conflict with no complete defeat of the

group. Instead, the "war on terror" and invasion of Iraq created a space for the Islamic radicals to build a stronger entity which eventually became ISIS. The counterterrorism approach for religious terrorist groups like Al-Qaeda and ISIS needs to have a balance between coercion and long-term policy for curbing the radicalisation process at the structural root.

One of the major problems of using proxy local forces to defeat the adversary is that the U.S. and Western powers have to bear in mind the long-term implications of their actions. It is necessary to formulate a plan for a political settlement after the cessation of conflict. Otherwise, it will lead to a situation similar to Afghanistan where the mujahidin were abandoned which lead to a civil war and rise of Taliban and eventually Al-Qaeda appeared. It becomes important to have a policy for settlement with the proxy forces after the objectives of counterterrorism policy is achieved to avoid the problems which might be created by them after the end of the conflict.

When nonstate forces are used they will not be hesitant in taking up arms of the sponsors and can act out of control without any fear of prosecution. In some instance, we have witnessed the 'blowback' situation when the strategy of U.S. in weaponising Taliban to fight the Soviet Union came as blowback after years in the form of Al-Qaeda. It is important for U.S. that even after the defeat of ISIS and removal of Assad has been accomplished the opposition used as a proxy in Syria by U.S. should be included in a plan of settlement. The question of Kurds independence should be thought and considered or else the tendency will be to move towards greater conflicts and establishment of a failed States. The mistakes from Afghanistan should not be repeated in Syria and efforts should be made to stabilize Syria to avoid further bloodshed between the disenfranchised groups.

Russia got involved in Syria due to its strategic interests in the region even more than its stated goal of fighting ISIS and Islamic fundamentalism. The loss of Syrian regime for Russia means loss of the only ally in the Arab world with the loss of its naval station in Tartus the only outlet for Russia in the Mediterranean Sea. Given the verbal clash of Russia with the West due to its annexation of Crimea, it wanted to secure its partner in the Middle East especially when U.S. led coalition had been trying to make

Assad step down from power. Russia has the history of backing despotic regimes like Milosevic in Yugoslavia, Saddam in Iraq and in Syria too it stands with the authoritarian regime of Assad to counter the Western influence in the region.

The conflicts and turmoil in the Arab world have been seen as the "clash within a civilization" rather than a "clash of the civilization" as put by Huntington. The arena of turmoil is very vast in the Arab world and has a high chance of spilling effect in other regions of the word. Though Huntington was true in arguing that the major wars will be fought in religious lines rather than ideological ones, but he missed to point out the intensity of sectarian divide that would embroil the countries following the same faith leading to battles and blood spilling now existing in the Middle East.

The conflict emanating from Syria and exacerbated by ISIS radicalisation will have a severe impact which might lead to the toppling of regimes and even redrawing of borders as some experts have speculated. The conflict has polarized people based on their communities and religious sects line making the conflict intensely deep-rooted which is very difficult to contain it. The conflagration of the conflict if perpetrated by terrorism and non-state actors like ISIS, it would have allowed the nation states in collaboration in containing it. But the situation in the Middle East has states whose interests are divided into sectarian lines, and have been pursuing proxy wars by Iran and Saudi Arabia, Lebanon Hezbollah, UAE, and Qatar which has only escalated the conflict and there is no sign of bringing peace in these already destabilized Arab states.

Iranian factor has been playing the major role in determining the relations between the regional states and between U.S. and regional allies. All the countries in the Middle East have been threatened by the rise of ISIS but out of all the countries, Iran has been the most concerned about the ISIS presence in the region. This is due to the fact that Iran stays in a hostile environment and Assad regime in Syria is its only ally among Arab nations. The sectarian conflagration has intensified the hatred for Iran moreover; the coming of ISIS which is based on Salafi Islamic ideology is a nemesis of Shia Islam which is all the more worrisome for Iran security. Although the Sunni majority countries have condemned ISIS the core ideological backing of the group comes from

Saudi propagated Wahabi school and has a history of providing financial backing to Islamic extremist groups. Bin Laden, for instance, got support from many Saudis in funding Al-Qaeda, but table turned after the emergence of ISIS which made its goal of establishing the Islamic caliphate and destroying all the apostates including Saudi Arabia. Although Saudi Arabia and Turkey the two main countries in the region that are worried about ISIS threat and supports U.S. led coalition but both countries follow Sunni Islam and hence their concern for ISIS is lesser than compared to what Iran intends to do in the Gulf region.

Lebanon's Hezbollah role has been important in Syria due to its support for the Assad regime. They are well trained and prepared than before and has aided Assad which was shown in Assad gaining of strength and retaking of territories from ISIS. Without the help from Hezbollah, Assad regime would have been fallen by now. The conflict has made the group stronger and skillful in using war technologies like drones. But this move by Hezbollah may have made itself stronger but the internal support in Lebanon has decreased due to its involvement in Syria.

In the wave theory of Rapport, we can see that the religious wave which started in 1979 and existing till today explains the rise of the religious terrorism. A wave is a cycle with the process of expansion and contraction and every wave's is replaced by a new wave after its demise. According to this theory the ongoing religious wave which gave birth to al-Qaeda and ISIS, David Rapport predicts that it will end by 2025 giving way to another wave.

In the fight against ISIS, the role played by U.S. affected its relationship with the countries in the Middle East both with traditional allies and traditional foes. Under Obama, the counterterrorism policy moved from hard-edged sword to that of leniency and pragmatism. This change occurred due to the realization of not so successful and expensive endeavor of attaining counterterrorism goals under Bush and his war on terror paradigm. Another reason was that the immediate priority objective of ISIS was toppling off of regional apostates rather than staging an attack in the U.S. as done earlier by Al-Qaeda whose first and foremost objective was to destabilize U.S. for attaining their ultimate goal of establishing a caliphate. Hence, Al-Qaeda posed a

greater threat to U.S. rather than ISIS, but in the long term, the latter proved to be more detrimental than the former. Obama did not want to repeat the mistakes committed by his predecessor Bush with ISIS and took slightly a different approach to deal with it. Instead of using the discourse on unilateralism Obama employed multilateralism as a part of counterterrorism policy against ISIS. For that matter regional states were seen by Obama to be the major player in containing ISIS and avoided deploying American army on the ground, instead coalition partners were created led by the U.S. which relied on aerial strikes in containing it.

The emphasis was laid on bringing regional states together rather than using direct force, for this purpose U.S. started balancing the relationships among regional partners. Iran became significant in influencing the situation in Syria due to its close ties with Assad regime, U.S. tried to ease relations with Iran to influence Assad from stepping down which is seen as one of the viable options in bringing the crisis in Syria to a negotiation. Iran is threatened by the rise of ISIS especially as Sunni rising is affected by ISIS success, Iran has an overriding interest in defeating ISIS more than any other issue in the region, hence, working relation was necessary.

The nuclear deal with Iran was deemed to be necessary for the opening up of such a relationship. On the other hand, Iran's nuclear weapons program is intriguing to the regional states and the nuclear settlement was viewed with skepticism by the traditional allies of U.S. like Saudi Arabia and Israel. Iran also understood the importance of U.S. role in the fight against ISIS. Both U.S. and Iran are dictated by their interests of defeating ISIS, now that the threat from Iran nuclear program has been replaced by the bigger threat of ISIS, which led to a shift in the relation between U.S. and Iran but it does not imply reaching of political rapprochement between the two states.

The conflict in Syria and problem of ISIS has revived sectarian tensions in the Middle East. The Shias and Sunnis had co-existed even though they had differences. In Iraq and Syria, the society has been fragmented and the states are being dismantled. In the Middle East, the problem with which it is mired today with is multi- faceted, terrorism coupled with sectarian violence and insurgency have plagued the fabric of the states.

This problem is not only confined to Iraq and Syria from which it erupted but has escalated to other states especially the failing states like Libya, Yemen, which has become a viable target for ISIS. Addition to the threat from ISIS, the bigger powers in the region is engaged in carrying out proxy wars, for instance, Saudi Arabia formed a coalition of Gulf states to attack Houthis in Yemen who are supported by Hezbollah and Iran. Spilling of conflict from Syria has embroiled the powerful states and the weaker states simultaneously dividing the governments along sectarian and nationalistic lines.

Obama led counterterrorism policy came to be seen as an anti-dote to that followed by Bush. There was a change in U.S. counterterrorism efforts against ISIS, the aim was to curtail the excess of 'war on terror' strategy based on pure hard power realities and return to a value based cooperative foreign policy. Counterterrorism policy got a strategic modification and moved away from Manichean and aggressive approach of Bush strategy and didn't allow counterterrorism to become foreign policy imperative by Obama. The first step in diluting the counterterrorism policy was the announcement of the closing of Guantanamo Bay facility and another was resolving the vexed issue of withdrawal of troops from Iraq. Due to the less reliance on coercive tactics in dealing with ISIS Obama policy has been highly contested and the critics labeled his counterterrorism policy to be pragmatic in approach. Nevertheless, the success of 'war on terror' materialized under Obama when Bin Laden was killed.

The creation of the caliphate by ISIS by capturing territories from Iraq and Syria in June 2014 came as a threat to U.S. and the world at large. The Syrian war escalated into new heights when ISIS came into the picture. U.S. barred taking military action against Bhasar al-Assad when the reports showed the use of chemical weapons against its civilians, only the entry of ISIS in Syria was the final alarm for U.S. to react. It developed a new strategy which was by allowing the regional powers to manage the situation who had major stakes in the region. It opted to use air power, intelligence as a part of military strategy, coalition, and multilateralism, capacity building measures as a pragmatic approach to curtailing ISIS. U.S. led coalition engagement in aerial bombings and use of local forces as boots on the ground was initiated to not repeat the

Iraq episode once again. Rather U.S. gave assistance to the local forces through the train and equip program which did not seem to have successful results.

The complexity of the conflict in Syria has hampered counterterrorism efforts, due to the mix of several issues from the insurgency to terrorism, to civil war, to an uncompromising stand of the dictatorial regime of Assad. The sectarian and ethnic divisions have created a stalemate in Iraq and Syria, the national unity in both the countries are hampered with the formation of numerous militia groups and power struggle among them. The conflict is destined to continue in near future due to the uncertainty regarding the question of Assad regime, Shia as an independent entity in Iraq and possibility of division of Iraq between different ethnic groups and the future of ISIS.

In the long run, the turmoil in Iraq and Syria will lead to a bigger threat from foreign fighters attracted to ISIS brand of jihadism, the outreach of ISIS to other countries and allegiance of the terrorist organization to it. Refugees generated by the conflict will have a wider socio-politico-economic impact in the host nations. U.S. views that replacement of Assad will open up a door for quelling extremism and bring different militias groups under negotiation but such a thinking has not been allowed to materialize due to the backing of Assad by Iran and Russia.

The violence in Iraq and Syria is not only creation from the internal actors, the neighboring states are competing for influence and power in the region, the Shia-Sunni divide has been taken as a competition between Persians, Arabs, Kurds, Turks. However, counterterrorism measure has been able to disrupt ISIS through aerial attacks, blocking access to funding, hampering its online activities, limiting its recruitment drive, taking back the captured territories in Iraq. In the long run, the choices for U.S. is not easy, every action taken will bear a unique set of costs and risks. Hence, having a well-balanced policy in cooperation with other states and actors is necessary without having an overarching strategy. The step should be to address the sectarian conflict in Iraq and Syria, the question of minorities, spread of ISIS to other parts, bringing clarity in the role of regional powers and not being hated in the process of curing terrorism.

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