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## CONTEMPORARY TERRORISM: A WORLD SYSTEM PERSPECTIVE

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### Abstract

*A trajectory view of the world system perspective reveals a fundamental engagement of protest against the ways we have thought or come to know the world around us. This realization only serves as an expression of the real protest concerning the deep inequalities of world system which have become politically central in our current times. This paper draws theoretical resources from the world system perspective and capping it with the terminal current unitary world and the place of terrorism in such system. Peripheral analysis of the world system was undertaken to expose the place and roles of nations globally and domestically in the development of contemporary terrorism. Lopsided economic structure, injustice, poverty and deprivation were identified as major factors facilitating the use of terrorist's strategies by poor nations (referred to as semi-periphery nations) and individuals in drawing attention to their plights. A review of the western economic mechanism (Globalisation) and how it engenders terrorism in the present world was undertaken. An excursion was also undertaken to explore the various instances of global terrorism and the Nigerian situation as well as the analysis of the fundamental reasons behind terrorism and the modern-day tools for terrorists with a view to advancing some antidotes towards addressing global and domestic terrorism and its implications for national development. The paper concludes by advocating that irrespective of the divide we find ourselves we must all return to the pristine foundation of rational humanism and the reinstatement of mutually beneficial relations between the human world and the natural world.*

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**Keywords:** *Terrorism, World system, Global terrorism, Domestic terrorism, Globalization, Violent acts*

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### Introduction

Terrorism is not a new phenomenon in fact, the menace and fear of terrorism may have necessitated the social contract in the Hobbesian mythical state of nature and other similar narratives by Locke and Rousseau. However, the current state of thinking about modern form of terrorism would have departed or deviated from the mythical solitary state of nature where 'might is right'. The term terrorism has no precise or widely accepted definition. The problem of a clear-cut definition is even compounded by the fact that terrorism has become a fad word used loosely and often applied to a variety of acts of violence that are not strictly terrorism (Borum,2003). There is perhaps also, no single definition of terrorism that can adequately cover all the varieties of terrorist acts that have occurred in the past. However, Serkesian (2001) in the Magazine "Scientific America" defined terrorism as 'violence or threat of violence designed to intimidate and sow fear throughout a target population in an effort to produce a pervasive atmosphere of insecurity, using a widespread of tactics such as assassination, hijacking, kidnapping, sabotage, taking hostages and the use of innocent victims to affect a third party'. Serkesian's view of terrorism therefore is the creation of fear in a population in order to force an existing system to respond to the terrorists' demands and / or objectives which are most often political and religious to certain extent.

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary 7<sup>TH</sup> Edition also defines terrorism as 'The use of violence for political aims or to force a government to act, especially because of the fear it causes among the people'. Terrorist attacks have also been extended to attacks on important and monumental structures of nations as was seen in the September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, attacks on the New York World Trade Centre and the Pentagon in

the US. Religious interests have also been defended by means of terrorism as in the case of Osama Bin Laden and the Al Gamaa al Islamiyah in Egypt, fighting against what they claimed were non-Islamic governments in their own countries and against Western interest.

Putting the above into proper perspective therefore, Freeh (2001) noted that ‘Terrorism is systematic, premeditated and calculated’. He further averred that the resulting toll in deaths and injuries is not the primary objective. Such carnage is a means to an end, part of an atmosphere of shock and fear that the terrorist wishes to create in order to undermine authority and gain a hearing for the specific cause. Elsewhere terrorism has been described as warfare of the desperate who consider themselves to be disadvantaged. Terrorism like beauty is in the eye of the beholder, and a person’s political persuasion often determines how it is defined. Benjamin Netanyahu, former Israeli ambassador to the United Nations and Prime Minister describes terrorism as: ‘The deliberate and systematic murder, maiming and menacing of the innocent to inspire fear for political ends.’ In view of the difficulty in defining the concept of terrorism one may be tempted to ask the following questions: whether the armed opposition groups who were considered as subversives in El Salvador, the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, the Palestinian Liberation Organization, and the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) are to be considered as liberation movements, freedom fighters or terrorist groups? It would be instructive to note that a person’s perception about terrorism, as has earlier been mentioned, lies in the eye of the beholder as various confounding factors may create distortion in its understanding (Post, 2005).

From the foregoing, we can define ‘Terrorism’ as a form of political violence that is deliberately directed in most instances against civilians indiscriminately. We also aver that its definition has become politically motivated as one person’s freedom fighter is another’s terrorist.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The aim of the study is to create an understanding of contemporary terrorism in the context of world system. The specific objectives are to:

- i. examine the role of globalization in the development of both global and domestic terrorists activities.
- ii. present instances of terrorist acts and strategies at the global and national levels.
- iii. suggest what needs to be done at both global and national levels to avoid terrorism.

### **Theoretical Framework - World System Perspective**

This model was developed by an American Sociologist - Immanuel Wallenstein in the 1970’s as an alternative to the modernization theory. According to Wallenstein (1974) “A World System is a multicultural territorial division of labour in which the production and exchange of basic goods and raw materials are necessary for the everyday life of its inhabitants”. The author in other words argued that his model is an interdisciplinary approach to understanding the world. He believed that modernization theory was a product of 19th century ways of thinking, which ensures a compartment of human knowledge, which implies that our problems of development and underdevelopment can only be viewed through the prism of political science and developmental economics. This perspective according to the author provides a “unified system approach” without limitation to any subject or approach in analysing global issues. In analysing world history and social change, Wallenstein reveals a world economic system which benefits some countries while others languish in abject poverty. The world system perspective presents three types of economic Nations: The core, the semi periphery and the periphery. According to the author in this system “surplus value” is transferred from the periphery to the core.

The Core Spheres- These are regions that are technologically and industrially advanced with capitalist tendencies. Their major features include: large tax bases, high standard of living, and higher income. For example, the G7 nations including China are deemed the core of the world system perspective.

The Periphery Spheres - These are countries that subsist by exporting primary products, like agricultural products and natural resources to the core countries. These periphery countries have low incomes and with

minimal tax base and low levels of human development index. Countries existing within the Latin American, Central Asia and Sub Saharan African parts are considered the periphery countries.

The Semi Periphery Spheres - Countries acting as periphery to the core countries and as a core to the countries on the periphery are found in this domain. These are regional powers with moderate levels of development indices. Countries within this domain could be identified as Brazil, Turkey, Mexico, Nigeria, Malaysia, and Israel. It is believed that adequate understanding of these peripheral spheres and their dynamics of economic development, underdevelopment and ideologies provides veritable reasons why some nations or groups indulge in terrorist acts to advance their national and or ideological interests.

### **Globalisation and Terrorism**

The emergence of Mikhail Gorbachev and his policies of 'Glasnost' and 'Perestroika' signified 'openness' in the formulation and implementation of state policy and decision-making process never experienced in the Soviet Union. These twin policies created the enabling environment for many countries of Eastern Europe, bound within the Warsaw Pact to demand for and obtain 'freedom' from the control of the Soviet Union. They also encouraged and allowed the self-determination campaign and ultimate 'independence' and break-up of Soviet Union into fifteen independent states. The 'collapse' of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact has been described as the 'death' of Communism.

As an economic phenomenon, Globalization is a shift from distinct national economies to a more integrated global economy. In today's global village the production of goods has been internationalized and money flows freely and instantly across borders. In this system, multinational corporations wield vast powers while anonymous investors can foster material prosperity or cause devastating depression in any part of the world. Globalization is perceived as bringing unprecedented opportunities to billions of people. The staggering expansion of world trade has induced a wave of productivity and efficiency and has created new jobs (Kivimaki, 2007)

On the other hand, globalization can also bring down economies overnight. A few clicks of a computer mouse can devalue a national currency very quickly washing away the life savings of millions of bread winners. A Board of directors can decide to close a plant in Mexico and open a new one in Thailand, it may also be creating jobs in Asia while subjecting hundreds of families in Latin America to destitution. Ominous words from the mouth of an influential Wall Street analyst can instantly cause a herd of panicked investors to sell their stocks in Asia and elsewhere creating a huge capital vacuum that could eventually drive millions into poverty. Economies that looked healthy one moment have become seriously ill the next – apparently not because of any new development within their own borders but because of a shock from abroad. All over the world, globalization has increasingly stitched lives into a single economic unit. It rarely improves living conditions for many (Michael, 2007).

The forgoing developments were significantly energized by the phenomenon: globalization. Universally, Globalization has placed great pressure on working people as governments force down wages and labour standards in an attempt to attract foreign investment with the promise of low costs. While some industrialized countries have profited from increased exports as a result of free global trade, poorer nations have largely been excluded from the feast. The result is global inequality (Kruggerkl, 2007). This is the lot of African countries, Nigeria inclusive.

Nigeria's participation as is the case with other 3<sup>rd</sup> World countries is determined by countries of the developed world. The US for instance was for a long time the largest importer of Nigeria's crude oil (which is the mainstay of the country's economy). The demand, supply and price of the commodity are exogenously determined. Hence the constant tension between organized labour and governments at all levels. Is it ethical for a small number of winners to enjoy extravagant wealth while a much larger number of losers are forced into humiliating deprivation? Truly, insatiable greed and moral decadence have created a world of tremendous financial inequality. At present there is an epic struggle of power and values between most people everywhere and the institutions of global economy. The outcome of this struggle will likely determine whether this century marks the descent of our species into anarchy of greed, violence, deprivation, and environmental destruction that could well lead to our extinction. From the above therefore,

it can be observed that globalization has engendered terrorism, as small weak states on the periphery and semi periphery as well as some disgruntled groups have discovered that it can greatly increase their political clout even as they are plagued by resource shortages. They are not likely to abandon terrorism as a political and military tool (Michael, 2007). In general, exploitation of these weak states is associated with imperialism and capitalism. This explains why most terrorist acts are directed at countries of the western world, most of whom actively participated in colonization of most countries of the world. It is in the light of this desperation occasioned by deprivation associated with globalization that the September 11, 2001 attack has been justified by some groups, who consider the current world economic system as unfair and exploitative of poor countries. In the view of such groups, it was an attempt to destroy the very heart or essence of capitalism, which has enabled an impoverished majority to be dominated, exploited, and controlled by a powerful minority. Just as globalization has been described as trade without borders so has terrorism become a pitiless war without borders. Globalization seems to have enhanced the capacity of terrorist groups to carry out attacks especially in countries of the Western World. However, terrorist activities are becoming more prominent within the periphery and semi periphery countries as a result of their weak economies and religious ideologies. We shall proceed to highlight some other fundamental reasons (apart from the influences of globalization) behind terrorist or violent acts especially.

### **Fundamental Reasons behind Terrorists or Violent Acts**

Away from the arguments of globalization as it engenders poverty with the attendant factor of inequality leading to terrorism, some writers, and theologians like Enwerem (2004) have argued that poverty is an important underlying causal factor for the prevalence of terrorism be it domestic or international. By poverty, he was not only referring to monetary or economic poverty but also to the poverty of ideas underlying the issue of violence and terrorism in our world today. It includes the inhibitive system around us as well as the poverty of leadership and the lack of leaders who are endowed with honesty and truthfulness of character to engage themselves in the struggle to eliminate the obvious inequality and injustice within society. It is this structure that weighs people down so much that they seek redress through the avenue of violence and terrorist acts or make themselves easily available to be used for such acts. As long as the structure is not eradicated, it is very likely that humanity will continue to violate itself with more and more of such terrible and horrendous actions that will certainly disturb the peace of the peaceable and the comfort of the comfortable. Little wonder Pope John Paul II in one of his presentations rightly agreed that what the world needs today more than anything else is peace, but to have peace we must give justice a chance.

To buttress the preceding assertion, two observations are worth noting at this juncture. First, is a situation where the less resource-blessed but wealthy and powerful 'North' uses its advantage, which was largely obtained at the unjust expense of the more resource blessed but poor and weak 'South', to maintain and perpetuate a global system that not only further exploits the 'South' but also keeps it away from sharing in the riches of the North. In other words, the global community has been deliberately left divided, determined, and dominated by a market economic structure whose basic vision or orientation is to place a price on everything, including human relationships.

Under the scheme of things, whether at the global or domestic contexts, issues do not become a problem until they attract the attention of the rich and powerful or are declared to be so by them. This characteristic tendency of governments, not being proactive or putting up a swift response to address compelling issues of poverty and the general good of the masses have led weaker states and the oppressed individuals to using terrorists tactics as a way of getting the attention of the core nations, governments and powerful individuals to their plight. When the terrorist tendencies began to affect the core countries and the rich, then they began to view the act as a monster that must be checked. An example is when it took place in front of American embassies in Kenya (in 1998 where over 200 hundred people were killed) and in Tanzania in the same year.

The second observation is buttressed at the national level where there has been an absence of political will at the highest levels of both the Federal and state governments of many states in Nigeria. The spate of

terrorist attacks and incessant shootings in Nigeria by known and unknown gun men has continued to heighten and exacerbate the state of insecurity and seeming failure of leadership / governance in the country (Alobi, 2020).

The above issues however expose the weakness of the Nigerian state, which is epitomized by the fundamental problem of failed leadership within the Nigerian polity. For instance, it is only in a failed state where the security of the citizens – a major rationale for the state – is treated with levity and nonchalant attitude. Such is the case that the citizens have so much lost confidence in the nation's security outfits that they now resort to protect themselves through the most bizarre and vicious manner that takes one back to the Hobbesian state of nature ( Enwerem,2004). Furthermore, looking at some of the fundamental reasons behind terrorist or violent acts, it is also important to note that global terrorism essentially represents an instance of resistance to an overbearing domination. There are leaders of groups and countries whose irrational goals are the annihilation of other cultures. The UN and the US, represent an instance of a unitary world system (Globalization) in which domination is enhanced. This domination includes economic, political, social-psychological and cultural domination. It is in this light that one will further and again draw the US' attention to some of the major political and economic causes of terrorism directed at the Western world.

One of these political factors has been described as the “Mega political creation of power” (Rees Moggs, 2001). Under this aegis, it is legitimate to carry on with whatever scheme you intend to impose on the rest of humanity provided you have the appropriate mechanism for bullying your way through. Obviously, logic of this kind clearly informs the practice of defining terrorism to suit the West as well as fanning war because they have produced guns. It explains the urge to dominate and the inability of Western citizens to see any success in any schemes that have no relationship except in lording their opinions or positions over those of other peoples and societies. The West must decisively be on top, and to impose its will. It is therefore not surprising that some subjugated people react by seeking to create a balance and to rediscover their psyche using the instrumentation of terrorism, violence, and unprecedented attacks on the West.

Frustration and hatred are also predisposing factors to terrorist acts across the globe. Terrorism is essentially fuelled by hatred and those who harbour such hatred live in a world that is coloured by bigotry, shaded by conspiracy and framed by ignorance. In many cases the primary motivation for a terrorist is a genuine frustration towards seemingly intractable, political, and economic forces (Borzath, 2008.). Injustice is also another factor that needs to be highlighted. Shimoff (2000) in his paper “The Policy of Terrorism”, explained terrorism as a symptom of a problem and not the actual cause and that our long-term goal should be the elimination of the underlying social and political causes of terrorism. When situated in the case of Nigeria, it is evident that the psyche of many groups within the country has been affected by the glaring injustice in the areas of appointments to high offices and resource allocation in the country. This level of frustration has affected Nigerian citizens both within and outside the country. Within the country many are frustrated with the current situation with the absence of satisfactory psychology of being at home while outside the country, they are stigmatized as criminals. The resulting effect is that such people are not committed to the unity of the country. This is reflected in the ever-expanding agitation for secession that has spread across the country in recent times. Such individuals may resort to terrorism or other violent acts to pursue their desires or interests within the political system (Orji, 2004).

### **Global Instances of Terrorist and Violent Acts**

The Israel/Palestinian conflict which has been long standing and has involved several Arab states has resulted in the death of several thousands of people on both sides. Some have argued that ‘it is simply extraordinary and without precedent that Israel's history, its record from the fact that it is a state built on conquest, that it has invaded surrounding countries, bombarded and destroyed at will to the fact that it currently occupies Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinian territories against international law. BeauChamp (2018) Argued that the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians has generated sympathy and sentiments from the Arab world towards the Palestinians precarious condition which clearly has worsened the state of insecurity in the region. Terrorist organizations in the region like the Hamas and Hezbollah become

prominent in terrorists activities targeted at Israel. Their argument only brings to the fore the reasons which have fuelled Islamic terrorism against the West (Kassimiuk, 2008).

India has been witnessing terrorist violence since 1980 initially in Punjab and since 1989 in Jammu and Kashmir and other parts of India. Several civilians have been killed in Jammu and Kashmir through both shootings and bombings. The 1999 serial bomb blast in Bombay was one of the major incidences of terrorism in India. Algeria has witnessed continued massacre of civilians since 1992. The government has been battling the Islamic Salvation Army and The Armed Islamic Group who took part in the Afghan wars after being trained in Pakistan and then went back to fight their governments in the name of Islamic Jihad

New York City, United States also witnessed religious extremists explode a massive bomb below the World Trade Centre killing 6, and injuring 1000. Following this was another massive attack at the World Trade Centre on September 11, 2001. This was the most devastating attack on humanity and a monumental structure perceived as the “Symbol of Capitalism”. Thousands of people were killed with many injured. This attack was much devastating on the psyche of the Americans.

In Matsumoto, Japan in June 27, 1994 members of the Aum Shinrikyo group sprayed gas in a residential neighbourhood, killing 7 and injuring 270. Another attack in Tokyo, Japan on March 20, 1995 was by the same group which carried six packages onto Tokyo subway trains, releasing sarin gas which killed 13 and injured 5000 people. (Borzarth, 2005). In Oklahoma City on April 19, 1995, an American by name Timothy Macveigh triggered a truck bomb which exploded at a federal building killing 168 and injuring 500. In Colombo, Sri Lanka on January 31, 1996 ethnic terrorists ran a truck laden with explosives into a bank killing 90 and injuring 1400 persons. In yet another incident, London – England had its share with Irish terrorists detonating a bomb in a parking garage, killing 2 and injuring 100. On February 25, 1996 Jerusalem was hit by a suicide bomber blowing up a bus. Religious extremists were suspected, about 26 people were killed while 80 others were injured. Dharam, Saudi Arabia on June 25, 1996 witnessed a fuel truck bomb explosion outside a US military housing facility killing 19 and injuring 515 persons. Also in Moscow, Russia, September 9 and 13, 1999 witnessed two huge explosions ripping through two buildings killing 212 and more than 300 persons were injured.

Current global situations concerning the epidemiology of terrorism and violent acts conservatively cost the world economy a whopping estimate of \$52 billion as at 2017 according to the Institute for Economics and Peace in the USA. The Global Terrorism Index (2018) as compiled by the Institute revealed the following four organizations as being responsible for the death of 10,632 people in 2017: Islamic state, the Taliban, and Al Shabaab and Boko Haram. It was also observed on the index that their actions contributed to the instability and insecurity observed in the following countries: Afghanistan, Iraq, Nigeria, Somalia, and Syria (GTI, 2018). The breakdown is as follows: Islamic State 4,350 deaths; Taliban 3,571 deaths; Al Shabaab 1,457 deaths; (the deadliest terrorist group in sub-Saharan Africa in 2017); Boko Haram 1,254 deaths. Within the Nigerian scenario other groups may include the Fulani Herdsmen classified by the US in 2015 as the world’s fourth most lethal terrorist group measured by the number of people killed (Business Day March 25, 2018); the Bandit group officially gazetted as terrorist group by the Nigerian government on the 29<sup>th</sup> November, 2021. These groups have been responsible for hundreds of thousands of deaths recorded using terrorists’ tactics across the country.

According to (SRD, 2021) 8,302 terrorist attacks were recorded globally in 2019 as against 14,371 cases earlier recorded in 2006. It was also indicated that majority of the acts were located in the Middle Eastern countries such as Afghanistan and Syria which suffered 1,294 and 871 attacks respectively and also North African countries. In further reviewing the 2019 global terror situation it was also observed that the highest number of deaths from terrorism occurred in Afghanistan, having 41 % of all deaths. Nigeria had the second position of most deaths as a result of terrorism - 9%, while the rest of the world had 20%. In further reviewing the GTI an increase in terror attacks was observed from 2018 (8,117) through 2020 (10,172). However, the highest number of deaths from terrorism in 2021 occurred in Afghanistan and this represented about 20% of all deaths attributable to terrorism within the period, while Burkina Faso came a

distant second with 10% of all deaths. In terms of terrorist activities impact, Afghanistan recorded 9.11 and Nigeria 8.23 on a scale of 1-10.

### **The Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction by Terrorists**

Weapons of mass destruction generally comprise three types – nuclear, chemical, and biological (WHO, 2004). Political leaders have repeatedly expressed concerns about the proliferation of nuclear arms and have worked to ensure strict control of the processes of developing nuclear capability of nations. Concerns also exist about the use of chemical as well as biological weapons. The world was shocked in early 1995 to hear of the terrorist poison-gas attack in the Tokyo subway system. Responsibility for the incident landed at the doorstep of an apocalyptic sect. Terrorism has changed as Brad Robert pointed out: “Traditional terrorists wanted political concessions. But now, some groups say their main aim is mass casualties. This makes biological weapons appealing”. Obtaining such weapon is in no small way difficult. As one can cultivate trillions of bacteria at relatively little risk to oneself with gear no more sophisticated than a beer fermenter and a protein- based culture, a gas mask, and a plastic over garment. Once the germs are prepared, delivering them is relatively easy. Victims would not even know that a weapon had been set off until a day or two later by which time it could be too late.

It is said to be a likely choice as a biological weapon. The disease got its name from the Greek word for coal – a reference to the black scabs that typically form over sores that develop on the skin of those who come in contact with Anthrax-infected livestock. In humans, anthrax infection has a high mortality rate. Why is anthrax such an effective biological weapon? The bacterium is easy to cultivate and is highly resistant. It would take several days before the victim would experience the first symptom: a flu-like malaise and fatigue. A cough and mild chest discomfort follow. Then comes severe respiration distress, shock and within hours, death. (Ellison, 2000).

### **Methodology**

Data was gathered using the secondary data collection approach. Our strategies appear in two phases:

- i. Data Base Searches: In this first phase abstracts and information pertaining to the aim and objectives of our study were sought for in the following:
  - Sociofile / Sociological abstracts
  - Public Affairs Information Services
  - Global Terrorism Data Base ( 2009 - 2021)
- ii. Annotations: In applying this method for data collection the following sources were used:
  - Key quote summary: Key quotes from original works were edited to lend credence to issues raised in the study.
  - Annotations written by some editors that are relevant to our study.
  - Author Abstract: This is as provided by the author and published where available.

The data base searches and the annotation strategies / designs enabled the provision of insights into the field as presented.

### **Implications of Contemporary Terrorist and Violent Acts**

As indicated above terrorism is a symptom of a problem and not the actual cause. Therefore, the goal should be to eliminate the underlying social-psychological and political causes of terrorism while enhancing freedom, dignity, justice, and humanitarian values. Terrorism at the national and international systems has enormous implications, which include the following:

- It is an intolerable attack on the fundamental human rights of innocent citizens.
- It has a severe and detrimental impact on international commerce and trade.
- It can also be construed as a great obstacle to world order since it not only strains relationships between states, but it also threatens the socio-economic and political well-being of some genuine peace-loving states. Through the instrumentality of globalization, terrorism may be triggered in far flung places as a

result of events or pronouncements that occur in other countries. It is possible for instance, for terrorist or violent acts to take place in Jos, Kano, and Nasarawa in Nigeria as an aftermath of events or pronouncements made in the US. The increased numbers of Refugees streaming into Europe and the United States and internally displaced persons in several countries across the world are clear manifestations of the outcome of terrorism or violent acts in some nations.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Terrorism is not a new phenomenon in societies. It has, however, attracted more serious concern because of its devastating consequences across several countries of the world. It has been argued that terrorism has become popular in recent years because it has produced the results sought by terrorists. About the most popular of these results is the desire to attract international attention to the groups and their causes.

Governments and the International community should be concerned about the elimination of the structural or systemic defects among states and within societies. Here we take note of the provisions of social welfare services to the masses. Urgent and effective action must be taken to address the problem of poverty and lack of opportunities in most 3<sup>rd</sup> World countries, which have fuelled insurgencies and terrorism in many countries. Concerted efforts must be made to provide educational opportunities for peoples of the 3<sup>rd</sup> World in order to develop human capacity and reduce the need for substantial percentage of citizens of these countries depending on the social welfare services. In other words, conditions must not be created to cause dependence on social welfare services before attempting to lift people on dependence on such services. There must be a linkage and it is the absence of this linkage that exposes the poverty and insincerity of such services. St. Augustine rightly observed that “A person who wishes others to be miserable, so that he or she can be merciful, is possessed by cruel mercy, just as doctor who would wish others to be sick, so that he might practice his act, would be a cruel healer” St. Augustine therefore admonishes to “Take away misery {that is the work of mercy} and there would be no room for work of mercy”.

We must try to nip terrorism in the bud as its consequences and fallouts have been devastating. It therefore seems necessary for counter terrorism agencies to determine both demographic and political factors nourishing today’s terrorism rather than sanctions through air, land, and sea strikes, which are not only a way of exacerbating global tension but also capable of creating new dangerous situations. The reality is that human effort to combat terrorism, no matter how sincerely motivated, cannot successfully deal with all its causes. Multinational cooperation will significantly reduce the scourge when the underlying causes such as poverty, unemployment, injustice, political and economic corruption are directly and actively addressed by countries. Nipping issues that fester and provide breeding grounds for terrorist recruits early will be of significant effect in reducing the spectre of terrorism across the world. Honest engagement of all those who believe that they have been wronged, disadvantaged, or oppressed by the system will assist in dousing the tension and reducing the level of frustration.

Above all, concerns for proper understanding of the human person may help in combatting the scourge of terrorism at any level. The human person is a composition of two elements, the body and the soul. For any attentiveness and response to the needs of the human person to be genuine and authentic, it must encompass the material and spiritual dimensions.

Summarizing the above, we owe it a duty to ourselves, no matter the side of the divide we find ourselves on, to end this callous play and return to the pristine foundations of rational humanism and the reinstatement of mutually beneficial relations between the human world and the natural world.

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