ISIS and Terrorism

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The history of the territory once held by the Ottoman empire records centuries of rises and falls of religious and other states of various forms. One that comes to mind while decoding this turbulent history is the Mamelukes, a long-lived caste of slave soldiers who became rulers of many territories before fading out. ISIS could just fold up and blow away, though people think it will have fragments drifting in and out for decades. Most of the scholars are of the view that the current wave of anti ‘crusader’ sentiment will create lots of debris (Gerges, 2017). The history of the Middle East going back thousands of years is remarkable for armed religious and other cults that emerged. ISIS is one of the worst contemporary organizations. The Taliban are not far behind. They dynamited the colossal Buddha statues of Bamiyan. The essay will discuss the history of ISIS along with its goals and what potential threats does it pose to the United States and the world at large. Moreover, the essay will focus on the counter-terrorism strategies that are effective in the aversion of terrorist attacks.

# All About ISIS

## The Inception of ISIS

The year 1999 marks the inception of ISIS. Musab al-Zarqawi was the man who laid the foundation stone of the organization with an aim to attack Shia Muslims. US invasion in Iraq added more fuel to the clout and in the year 2004, ISIS swore its allegiance to Osama Bin Laden. ISIS not only changed its name following the allegiance to Osama Bin Laden but also changed its targets i.e. from Shia Muslims to coalition forces in Iraq. Albeit, the organization became a daughter organization of Al-Qaeda group; however, ISIS was against the principle of Al-Qaeda. Al Qaeda was more focused on establishing more organizations of fighters, whereas ISIS was focused on targeting Sunnis in Iraq (Chaliand & Blin, 2016). Al Qaeda disowned ISIS virtually following the spat between two groups owing to the conflict in interests. Abu Bakar Al Baghdadi succeeded Zaraqawi following his demise and became the leader of ISIS.

## Ideology of ISIS

ISIS and almost every other terrorist groups derive their ideology from Wahhabism, Wahhabism’s ideology spins around the purity of Muslim, which can only be applied through a strict form of sharia and the exclusion of all non-believer. Terrorist even take it a little further and start using this Ideology on fellow Muslims (Zelin, 2014). So, if people do not swear their allegiance to Wahhabism then they will be considered as infidels by such organizations. People who support the beheading of others, Muslims like ISIS supporters that support the killing of other Muslims. Al Qaida leader al-Zawahiri said killing of Muslims is illegal, however, these people don't have any problems killing their own children if they go against their ideology.

## Strengths and Weaknesses of ISIS

### Strengths

ISIS has some advantages that make up for lack of technologically advanced weaponry. Following are the strengths of ISIS

* One of the greatest strengths of ISIS is that it is indigenous to the region. The history and the race of ISIS are the same as the local population - the only difference between ISIS and the local populace is ideology.
* ISIS is decentralized and fragmented.
* The change of tactics by coalition or US forces is very slow, and this enhances the strength of ISIS and ISIS has continuously exploited this very easily.
* The organization does not require sophisticated or state of the art equipment to carry out surveillance on US/UN forces.
* ISIS fighters are nameless, faceless and stateless. If US/UN forces kill one fighter, three or five more pop up in their place. Half of the recruiting for ISIS is done by the US and Western Europe: Islamophobia in US society, the way Syrian refugees are being treated, France's ban on the burqa and etc.

### Weaknesses

ISIS relies, in part, on the control of information to dominate and manipulate the populations they terrorize in the regions captured by their forces. However, social media tools ISIS supporters rely on can be used against them (Chaliand & Blin, 2016). Fighting with all other rebels on the territories is the other fatal mistake ISIS leaders have committed.

## Purpose

The purpose of ISIS is to reject all sorts of incongruities in the religion. The main purpose of ISIS is to bring the Caliphate system back and builds the whole system on the Salafi principle. ISIS observes a stricter form of Sunni Islam known as Salafi. It openly promotes religious violence, and murdering Muslims who do not agree with their goals. They are committed towards the Wahhabi movement which the Sunni Muslims had started. It has embraced slavery and crucifixion without any inhibition.

# Counter-Terrorism Strategy

Terrorism is a very multi-headed beast. It cannot be solved by one method alone. The sole use of force creates terrorism. The sole use of diplomacy creates weakness. A combination of different factors helps in any given terrorist situation. The following strategy could be the most effective strategy for countering terrorism.

Education

When the problems were happening in Northern Ireland, there were a number of attempts to bring the two sides together. There were a number of kids who were taken on weekends away in order to get them to mix. They learned that they were not the horrors that their own side said they were. “Most of us remember watching a documentary on it when we were kids and a really sad thing was that the two sides were able to walk down the same street but the street was divided by a massive barbed wire fence” (Brady, 2017). The fact is when people remember that “Terrorists” are people and that they have many different issues, we can start walking a path that reminds us that we are all humans.

Diplomacy

The issue that people forget that with terrorism is that it is one thing to get rid of the terrorists, but it is another to make sure that they don't come back again. Time and time again, history has shown us that violence begets violence (Brady, 2017). With diplomacy, we help to see past the violence and help solve the problems that are in the background. Northern Ireland has calmed down a lot. This wasn't through the use of fire-power.

Patience

We want to solve terrorism; we need to wait and think. It is like dancing on the head of a pin. One wrong move and we are out. Terrorism is far more than violence. We need to see the issues that are in the background and the reasons that lead them down the dark path they are on. We can only solve terrorism by waiting and thinking and talking. North Korea and South Korea spent almost three years discussing the room that they would discuss things in. They have made a lot of headway since they first raised the wall.

Appropriate use of Military

No terrorist organization has been totally solved with words. Horrible as it is to say, there are times when the military is going to be needed. We will need to use the military in the correct manner in order to kill the extremists of that organization. The fact is that the terrorists want to gain political and military might. We have to have teeth to bite back. Sometimes the use of force becomes inexorable to overcome terrorist issues.

# References

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