Unveiling Radicalization as an Unintended Consequence of Foreign Military Operations

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ABSTRACT

Due to ever evolving security concerns, the relationship between foreign military interventions and terrorism has become a focal point of intense scrutiny and debate. This paper delves into the differing dynamics surrounding this relationship, considering the implications for global stability, international relations, and the broader socio-political landscape. Drawing on interdisciplinary perspectives from security studies, international relations, terrorism studies, and psychology, this study examines the complexities of how military interventions impact the rise of radicalization and terrorism. It explores existing correlations, unintended consequences, potential causal mechanisms, and contextual factors shaping the dynamics of terrorism in the presence and aftermath of foreign military interventions. The contemporary case of the War on Terror serves as a reference, highlighting both the intended and unintended consequences of such interventions. Moreover, this study examines the psychological considerations that emerge from these interventions, underscoring their role in shaping the responses of state actors and terrorist organizations alike. Ultimately, the paper emphasizes the need for nuanced analysis, psychological considerations, and evidence-based policymaking to effectively address the root causes of terrorism while upholding principles of sovereignty and human rights, and finds that there is a causal connection between psychological theories of motivation and the impacts of foreign military interventions' risk of creating the threats they often seek to destroy.

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Paper

In an increasingly interconnected world that has been marked by geopolitical rivalries, regional conflicts, and transnational threats, the relationship between foreign military interventions and terrorism has become a subject of intense scrutiny and debate. The deployment of military forces by one nation in another's sovereign territory has far-reaching implications, not only for immediate security, but also for global stability and the dynamics of international relations. At the heart of this discussion lies the complex interplay between state actions, terrorist organizations, and the broader psychological and socio-political landscapes within which they operate. This paper seeks to contribute to this ongoing discourse on foreign military interventions and terrorism by examining key dimensions of their relationship, understanding psychological considerations that emerge from interventions, and exploring the evidence and conclusions from the contemporary case of the War on Terror to try and determine whether military interventions are able to quell terrorism, or whether they are continually igniting it. Drawing on interdisciplinary perspectives from fields including international relations, security studies, terrorism studies, and psychology, it aims to shed light on the complex dynamics underlying this critical issue, to better understand the root of the threat, and to offer actionable recommendations for policymakers, practitioners, and scholars alike.

Research Question and Elaboration

The question that this paper seeks to answer is whether radicalization has become an unintended consequence of foreign military interventions (FMIs), and the main goal of this paper is to provide a deeper understanding of the connection between psychology and the radicalization process in the context of FMIs and their consequences, including collateral

damage. There are several relationships at play that will need to be studied in order to best analyze the research and make definitive conclusions, namely the ways that specific aspects of FMIs have radicalizing effects on vulnerable populations in the affected areas. It seeks to provide an in-depth analysis of consequences of foreign military interventions, focussing on the most dangerous consequence - collateral damage. It then aims to understand why for some, these consequences lead to radicalization, through an investigation of the psychological considerations of FMIs, which serve as explanatory theories. These considerations are incredibly important, as they bridge the divide between understanding what the consequences are, and why the consequences might have further damaging impacts.

The study of how foreign military interventions impact terrorism is multifaceted and inherently challenging, spanning different fields, ranging from security and strategic considerations to psychological questions - and what these could mean for the future of international relations. It requires a nuanced analysis of existing correlations, unintended consequences, potential causal mechanisms, and the contextual factors that help to shape the dynamics of terrorism in the presence and aftermath of military interventions. Moreover, the empirical evidence found can be used to inform policy formulation, strategic planning, and international cooperation aimed at countering the threat of terrorism at the root of the problem, instead of fighting fire with fire, while still upholding principles of sovereignty and human rights.

For the purpose of this paper, the focus is mainly on military presence with the goal to oppose rebel or ‘terrorist’ groups, thus falling under category one in Pearson’s classification system. Further, this paper will focus specifically on FMIs that were undertaken *without* a United Nations peacekeeping mission, particularly those in the Middle East - namely in Iraq, due to

large military presence and the high rates of insurgency following the occupation, with references to South Asia (Afghanistan) as well. The intervention of a foreign power into another state's domestic conflicts, or political situations brings with it several complex costs on the ground. Utilizing these costs as lenses for further study allows us to understand how the goals of the FMIs may be seriously misguided with the potential for massive fallout, and how oftentimes, engaging in militarized counterterrorism strategy can become counter-effective.

Methodology of the Paper

This paper will use a literature review methodology in order to synthesize existing findings pertaining to the research question. The primary focus is on utilizing secondary data sources, including scholarly articles, book chapters, policy reports, and other relevant publications. This approach allows for comprehensive examination and analysis of existing knowledge and insights related to the subject. By aggregating the findings from the literature, the goal is to provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of knowledge regarding military interventions, collateral damage, and the radicalization process. This paper will also utilize existing literature to conduct a case study on the War on Terror and the ways in which it inflamed the conditions for radicalization across Iraq, and the Middle East more broadly, to illustrate the psychological findings, causal mechanisms, and linkages.

It is also important to delineate the scope and boundaries of this literature review. While the aim is to provide a comprehensive synthesis of existing literature on the effects of military interventions and the process to radicalization, it is important to acknowledge the impossibility of encompassing every facet and nuance within this paper. As such, certain thematic areas or sub-disciplines may receive more extensive coverage than others, reflecting both the availability of relevant literature and the overarching objectives of this study.

Justification for the Study

This paper seeks to demonstrate the connection between psychology and the radicalization process in the context of FMIs. Reviewing studies that investigate the ways that collateral damage can be a major motivational factor for radicalization will provide additional insight into this topic, and highlight how international relations studies can benefit from taking a more psychological approach to develop a better understanding of the root causes of radicalization in military settings, as well as similar issues. It also lays out the role that powerful institutions play in creating or exacerbating an environment ripe for radicalization. Without this exploration of a deeper psychological understanding, there is a critical gap left within the literature, as major potential motivational factors have been ignored. If this gap is filled, the many implications, include the following:

(1) Informing International Relations: The study of foreign military interventions' impact on terrorism contributes to a better understanding of the dynamics of international relations. Military interventions by one nation in another country's affairs can have significant ripple effects not only on the immediate region, but also on global security and stability.

Analyzing how military interventions influence terrorism can shed light on the complexities of state interactions, alliances, and conflicts in the international system. It may help to reveal how actions taken by one state can shape the security environment for other states and impact their national interests and security priorities. For example, a foreign military intervention in a conflict-ridden region may have unintended consequences for neighbouring countries, such as spillover of violence, influxes of refugees, and/or destabilization of fragile states. These secondary effects can create new security challenges for other nations.

Moreover, studying the impact of foreign military interventions on terrorism highlights the interconnectedness of global security threats and the need for collective action to address them effectively. Thus, by understanding how military interventions shape international relations and security dynamics, policymakers can anticipate potential risks, assess the consequences of their actions on regional and global stability, and engage in more strategic solutions to mitigate conflicts and to promote peace and security.

(2) Understanding Cause and Effect: Studying the impact of foreign military interventions on terrorism helps in understanding the cause-and-effect relationship between these interventions and the emergence or suppression of terrorist activities. This understanding is crucial for policymakers, as it allows them to assess the effectiveness of military interventions in achieving their intended goals regarding counterterrorism efforts.

For instance, research might reveal that certain types of military interventions, such as large-scale ground invasions or drone strikes, tend to exacerbate terrorist recruitment and radicalization due to civilian casualties and resentment among local populations. On the other hand, more targeted interventions, such as special operations or humanitarian assistance, might have a more positive impact on reducing terrorism by addressing root causes of conflict and instability. By researching past interventions and their consequences on terrorism, there can be new policy recommendations put forth to develop more nuanced and evidence-based strategies for addressing security threats while minimizing unintended negative consequences.

(3) National Security Concerns: Foreign intervention can have many implications regarding national security, and the rise of terrorist groups as a response to this often correlates to involvement of external actors in a region. If these connections are studied, the government and security agencies can create more effective counterterrorism strategies that do not inadvertently

increase the likelihood of new terrorist developments. Thus, policymakers need to understand how their decisions regarding military interventions abroad can influence the dynamics of terrorism, both domestically and internationally. Further, policymakers can make more informed decisions about whether, when, and how to intervene militarily in conflicts abroad. They can tailor their strategies to minimize the risk of unintended consequences, such as blowback or escalation of violence, while maximizing the effectiveness of their efforts to combat terrorism.

(4) Humanitarian Concerns: By understanding how foreign military interventions affect terrorism, policymakers can consider the humanitarian consequences of their actions. This includes assessing the potential for civilian casualties, displacement, and other humanitarian crises resulting from military interventions. Military interventions, particularly those involving airstrikes, ground operations, or proxy conflicts, often result in civilian casualties, displacement, and other humanitarian crises.

These humanitarian consequences can have several indirect effects on terrorism. For example, civilian casualties and displacement may fuel grievances and resentment against intervening forces or their allies, providing fertile ground for terrorist recruitment and radicalization. Moreover, the destruction of infrastructure, disruption of livelihoods, and displacement of populations can create conditions of poverty and instability that breed extremism and violence. Understanding these humanitarian consequences is essential for policymakers to weigh the potential benefits of military interventions against their costs in terms of human suffering and long-term stability. It also underscores the importance of incorporating humanitarian considerations into military planning and decision-making processes to mitigate harm to civilian populations and address the root causes of conflict and terrorism.

(5) Preventing Future Radicalization: Having an understanding of the factors that contribute to the emergence and growth of terrorist groups is essential to preventing radicalization. These factors include the consideration of deprivation, grievances and perceived injustices, and in-group/out-group narratives. Knowledge of these factors can help policymakers address the root cause(s) allowing radical ideologies to take root and spread by implementing effective strategies to try and counter ideologies. This includes decisions related to diplomacy, military intervention, aid, and other measures. Rather than relying solely on military force, they can adopt a more holistic approach to address some of the root causes of terrorism, such as political grievances, economic inequality, and social marginalization.

Developing a deeper understanding of these implications helps to not only bolster counterterrorism strategy, as there will be more attention drawn to the root causes of radicalization, but may also help to promote emerging solutions for the prevention of further radicalization. It is important to consider whether terrorism provides grounds for military intervention, or whether military intervention actually creates more terrorism, because otherwise, the true beginnings of radicalization may never be adequately addressed.

CHAPTER ONE: THE CONSEQUENCES OF FMIs

Introducing & Defining Foreign Military Interventions

Political conflicts across the globe have long since prompted the use of military intervention by foreign powers. Within this paper, a distinction is made between military intervention involving the use of troops and forces on the ground, and economic and humanitarian military intervention. Therefore, foreign military interventions (FMIs) will be defined as follows.

A study on FMIs conducted by Frederic Pearson classifies these interventions into three main categories to understand their intention and impact. Firstly, affect - where the intervention might be hostile opposition to the target government and/or opposition groups, support for the target government/opposition groups, or 'neutral' interventions, typically for peacekeeping processes (Pearson, 1974). Secondly, the intervention may be undertaken for political purposes, where the intervener is involved in domestic disputes within the target state, where the intervener does not clearly back one side in a domestic dispute, where FMIs and the presence of troops have implications for the target's foreign and/or domestic policies, or where they have implications for the conditions in the target state (Pearson, 1974). Thirdly, they can be classified according to issues of concern to the intervening power and the government, which can be demonstrated by the actions of their troops once inside the target state, and by historical accounts of what interests are involved and at play (Pearson, 1974).

Defining Terrorism

Defining terrorism has remained a contentious and notoriously difficult task, due to the complicated and highly subjective framing of the issue. At its core, terrorism involves the deliberate use of violence, intimidation, or coercion to achieve political, ideological, or religious

goals. However, attempts to coin a universally accepted definition have been challenging, as interpretations vary across legal, academic, and political realms - what one state sees as a terrorist is what another sees as a freedom fighter, or vice versa. There are also many prejudices and biases that play into how certain groups are designated ‘terrorist’ or not. According to a report conducted by the Canadian Department of Justice, the three main factors that prevent a universal definition of terrorism include the use of the term in politically motivated situations, issues with the scope and breadth of the term (i.e. where does terrorism start and end?), and problems with characterizing and categorizing terrorism (Weinberg et al., 2004). Thus, the fluidity of the term, coupled with its subjective implications, has led to ongoing debates surrounding its parameters and applicability.

This paper notes these subjectivities, and pays close attention to biases, as well as the characterization and politically motivated categorization of terrorist groups. Further, it is recognized that the definition is malleable, and constantly subject to change. With this noted, the definition used to guide this analysis and discussion will be the definition provided in section 83.01 of the *Criminal Code of Canada*, which defines terrorism as “an act committed in whole or in part for a political, religious or ideological purpose, objective or cause" with the intention of intimidating the public "…with regard to its security, including its economic security, or compelling a person, a government or a domestic or an international organization to do or to refrain from doing any act." (*Criminal Code,* 1985). The activities recognized under this definition as constituting ‘criminal activity’ are those that include death, bodily harm with the use of violence, endangerment of a person or peoples’ lives, risks posed to health and safety, among many more (*Criminal Code,* 1985).

FMIs and Their Consequences

Foreign military interventions, or FMIs, have become a defining part of life in the 21st century, most pervasively across Central Asia and the Middle East (Pettinger, 2015, p. 93). In these regions, there has been a large amount of Western intervention, which has caused much social and political upheaval, and is also seen alongside a rise in terrorism from the affected countries towards the West (Pettinger, 2015, p. 93). The aim of this primary literature review is to understand whether there is a true correlation between military intervention and terrorist blowback. It is a commonly seen phenomenon: some of the most deadly terrorist attacks have been a response to cases of foreign occupation (Braithewaite, 2015, p. 354). Yet, there is still a lack of understanding as to why FMIs - especially when they are labelled as counter-terrorism offensives - can be a defining factor in what motivates individuals to get involved in terrorist groups.

In order to understand when FMIs result in terrorism against the interests of the deploying state, we must first assume that terrorists act as both rational and strategic actors (Braithewaite, 2015). Martha Crenshaw looks at terrorism as a way to express and exercise political strategy, and finds that the use of violence is used as a strategic choice with strategic reasoning behind it (Crenshaw, 1988, p. 12). Thus, she looks at terrorism as a mechanism that individuals use when other alternatives - i.e. legal non-violent alternatives - seem impossible, or have been exhausted. When groups do not have the ability to properly compete with or fight back against the powerful elites who monopolize the use of force, they often turn to the more radical solutions. Small groups will use drastic violence to compensate for their lack of numbers, and the acts of violence are aimed to overcome the asymmetry in power (Braithwaite, 2015, p. 353).

Further, the asymmetry of these types of conflicts has always created unintended consequences that have the potential to exacerbate the pre-existing tensions due to the presence of an unwanted force. Military interventions, even under counter-terrorism or "low-intensity conflict" titles still create problems for the affected state, creating unintended consequences for every level of society - from politics to the military, to the terrorist organizations themselves (Erbay, p. 4, 2012). One of the key factors in understanding how this happens is through understanding the different types of intervention, and how they produce different types of backlash.

Different FMIs, Different Consequences - Same Outcome

There are different types of military offensives that an intervening state might conduct, for various reasons. From large-scale ground operations, to targeted drone strikes, to the intersection of politically motivated attacks, each type of offensive produces a unique set of consequences for the state and its affected populations. However, the common ground for each of these different interventions is that they all have the potential to create backlash against the intervener.

Full-scale interventions, or military interventions with boots on the ground, without a doubt cause some of the biggest issues for citizens of the occupied country - even just having a visible military presence can become a grievance for locals. Most of the full-scale FMIs that we have witnessed in the 21st century were related to the 'War on Terror' - but it begs the question of whether the chicken or the egg came first. These interventions were a direct response to the 9/11 attacks, but the 9/11 attacks occurred as a result of anti-American sentiments due to their involvement in Middle Eastern affairs - the US military presence in Saudi Arabia was a massive recruiting tool for al-Qaeda (Pettinger, 2015, p. 94).

These interventions have such a high potential to produce backlash, because they carry such large consequences for territorial sovereignty, civil order, and cultural conflicts (Pettinger, 2015, p. 95). Citing the War on Terror, as the United States occupied Iraq and Afghanistan, the reputation it built in the region became increasingly worsened. Their worsening reputation was dangerous, given the already very negative perception of the US across the Middle East, due to sanctions enacted against Saddam Hussein, and because of its close ties to Israel, among other issues (Pettinger, 2015, p. 95). The United States was also immune from being tried by local courts for the crimes they were carrying out in the affected countries. These factors, combined with the mass levels of destruction that full-scale interventions produce, led many civilians to turn towards terrorist tactics with the belief that in doing so, they would preserve their territorial integrity, and social dignity. This was especially common because of the massive power imbalance the invasion created. Terrorist recruiters used this to their advantage, and presented propaganda that portrayed terrorism as the inevitable backlash against the violations occurring (Pettinger, 2015, p. 96). When people are subjected to FMIs and military occupations, they feel restrained in the options they have to bring an end to their unjust conditions, due to the sheer power fighting against them - FMIs are most often undertaken by states with high military capabilities, far higher than those of the non-state actors that oppose them (Piazza & Choi, 2018). This creates an environment of power asymmetry between the intervener, and the opposition. To again cite the War on Terror, fighting back with violence seemed like an attractive option to many people, as they felt they could win back their sovereignty, and preserve their dignity and identities through these means, given the lower capacity that their groups had in comparison to the United States military (Pettinger, 2015, p. 98).

Further, full-scale interventions tend to massively compromise civil order - they disrupt provision of necessary services, and degrade quality of life, including physical and societal conditions (Piazza & Choi, 2018). The destruction of infrastructure, political systems, and societal organization leads to chaos, and this can in turn cause state fragility and eventually, state failure. Failed states breed terrorism because people often see the terrorist groups as being able to give them back a better life, or give them back their freedom (Piazza & Choi, 2018). The constant displacement and human rights violations can also have a strong hand in making individuals more susceptible to the terrorist cause. Repression and human rights issues are significant predictors of terrorist activities, because the affected populations are likely to feel far less cooperative toward the intervener, and more sympathetic to the violent extremists fighting against occupying powers (Piazza & Choi, 2018).

Aerial interventions, otherwise known as drone strikes or 'limited' interventions also have the potential to create the conditions that allow terrorist activity to prosper. These can have a radicalizing effect on the affected populations and their communities. With no visible personnel or military representatives on the ground during such attacks, the lack of face-to-face contact can result in a misunderstanding both from the attackers on the consequences they have created on the ground, and those impacted about the intentions of the attack. Drone strikes are typically employed in counter-terrorism offensives, in order to eliminate direct threats. However, when they end up causing further casualties or destruction and the attacker has no 'face', those affected may be highly motivated to seek revenge. Further, these attacks tend to have a highly traumatizing effect on the local populations, causing massive desolation similar to that of full-scale interventions, creating an environment ripe for terrorist recruitment.

While understanding the *types* of interventions that have a high likelihood of producing unintended consequences, it is also important to understand the motivation and classification of the FMIs, and how these can also be utilized for terrorist recruitment. The intervention classification that tends to prompt the most backlash are interventions with the goal of enhancing political, military, and strategic positions of the intervener (Piazza & Choi, 2018). This is incredibly important to note, as any *type* of intervention can be conducted with this motivation behind it. Socio-economic FMIs - such as providing humanitarian aid - are much less likely to produce this result (Piazza & Choi, 2018).

Political leaders of intervening countries often try to manage their domestic issues and challenges in different regions by sending troops overseas - which is typically seen as a massive breach of sovereignty and independence, especially when there is belligerent use of force over highly politicized issues. The backlash from these interventions comes from a heightened sense of nationalism, because of the encroachment on state sovereignty in the occupied country (Piazza & Choi, 2018, p. 688). There is a desire to remove the military, especially when they interfere in political affairs or try to advance a particular strategic agenda benefitting their own interests. Resentment from this is also highly likely to be exploited by terrorists, who view this as a threat to their identity.

Different Perspectives - Are Militaries Causing More Terrorism?

Due to the aforementioned issues, many academic discussions centre on whether military interventions, especially those with the goal of engaging in counterterrorism activities, are even effective, or whether they have become completely counter-productive. From a policy perspective, the use of military organizations is actually very problematic for counterterrorism purposes. It is incredibly difficult to minimize civilian casualties during military actions, which

raises the question of how governments can fight terrorist threats and still operate within the rule of law (Erbay, 2012). Civilian casualties and breaches of international law provide fuel for the recruitment efforts of terrorist organizations, and as such need to be avoided wherever possible. There needs to be better consideration for the effect that these types of interventions have on civilians and their perceptions of the military and the states responsible for the military presence. Erbay states that "for all countries that engage terrorist organizations with their militaries, it is extremely important to be aware that the use of the military in counterterrorism may create the conditions that help nourish terrorism rather than diminishing it" (Erbay, 2012, p. 3).

The current literature holds that states experiencing FMIs tend to develop strong senses of nationalist resentment against the intervener and the occupying powers (Piazza & Choi, 2018). Nationalistic rage in these territories helps extremist groups utilize terrorism against the interveners and gain support from locals and civilians in doing so - being on the receiving end of FMIs helps the public accept and support the legitimacy of using terrorism as a response or as backlash for the conditions they have been subject to living in, and widens the pool of both recruits and sympathizers (Piazza & Choi, 2018). Terrorist groups will encourage and exploit the responses that locals have to the arrival of foreign troops on their homeland (Braithewaite, 2015, p. 374). Whether the FMI was in the Cold War Era, or post-9/11, there has always been a history of violence used as a response to troops on the ground (Braithewaite, 2015). In particular, the birth and/or growth of terrorism may be the largest unintended consequence of military operations, which should act as cautionary forewarning for any states that use troop deployments as a consistent way to enhance their own state security (Braithewaite, 2015).

Finally - the type of FMI, and the motivation of the FMI, *do* matter in motivating terrorism and terrorist recruitment. FMIs that are full-scale, politically motivated, and have a

high likelihood to cause infringements on sovereignty among the most dangerous to undertake because they create a strong sense of nationalistic solidarity that, when combined with frustrations about power imbalances, make terrorism an attractive revenge tactic - even to people who were not previously violently inclined (Piazza & Choi, 2018). Something to further consider, however, is how the collateral damage that stems from these FMIs combines with other motivating factors.

Collateral Damage

Civilian casualties are the tragic reality of any FMI, no matter the intention or motivation behind the intervention (Condra et al., 2010). Civilian deaths from military operations are typically referred to as 'collateral damage' - and have, without a doubt, become an unintended consequence with some of the highest potential for radicalization and terrorist backlash. This raises the question of how radical groups and terrorists are able to mobilize populations so easily in the wake of collateral damage. We must quantify the relationship between civilian casualties and violence in order to learn more about *why* it happens, and to better understand the motivation and desire for radical actions that stem from collateral damage (Condra et al., 2010, p. 3).

It is important to note that both of the aforementioned FMI classifications have the potential to generate massive civilian casualties, but drone strikes/limited aerial interventions in particular result in high motivation from collateral damage. Further, military attacks leading to the death of non-combatants is recognized as a war crime. Since there is no military 'face' on the ground of the intervention to either diminish increased civilian concern, and to provide an explanation for the strikes, a vacuum for terrorist propaganda is created - one which enables terrorist leaders to take on the role of the 'heroes' who will end the threat to the innocents continually affected by violence (Pettinger, 2015, p. 105).

Civilian anger at the intervener plays right into the hands of the recruiting groups. A study conducted by *Condra et al.* found a positive relationship between civilian casualties, and the level of future violence in an area, through increased recruitment after a large civilian casualty incident (Condra et al., 2010, p. 4). The study found that when people are aggrieved at the loss of their family, friends, community, etc. and in their grief, anger, and hopelessness, they become more vulnerable to recruitment (Pettinger, 2015, p. 99). The Taliban used this to their advantage following the United States bombings of Afghanistan in 2001 - many civilians died even though it was supposed to be a targeted attack, resulting in outrage from civil society and people feeling increasingly less sympathetic to the intervener. Further, because occupations and FMIs are done by foreign powers, backlash in the form of terrorism from these civilian casualties is far more likely and more likely to occur at a much larger degree, because of the threats to state and territorial sovereignty on top of the collateral damage (Pettinger, 2015). Combining the death of family, friends, neighbours, community members, etc. with the perceived threat to their identity and livelihoods creates a sense of resentment and anger towards the responsible party.

Thus, the second chapter of this paper will examine the ways in which FMIs and collateral damage contribute to identity-based and grievance-based motivations, and ingroup and outgroup narratives, thereby strengthening the sense of solidarity within terrorist organizations. By working to better understand and acknowledge the psychological dimensions of terrorism at play during FMIs, policymakers, law enforcement agencies, and other experts in the field can develop targeted counterterrorism approaches aimed at prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation. Ultimately, addressing the psychological aspects of terrorist motivation is essential for fostering a more nuanced and effective response to this complex global threat.

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES - THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF FMIS AND THEIR COLLATERAL DAMAGE

Theories Involved

This chapter seeks to look deeper at the psychological dimensions of FMIs and the radicalizing effects that their consequences, including collateral damage, have the capacity to create. It aims to provide an overview of emotions in conflict and the psychology of violent behaviour, as well as explaining how five major psychological theories can be utilized as causal mechanisms for understanding how individuals who experience FMIs have a higher potential of being radicalized than previously understood, underscoring the importance of considering psychology within the realm of international relations and foreign policy decisions.

Conflict and Emotions

While conflict can be created *by* emotions, conflicts also create emotions. Psychology and emotional considerations are often left out of the mainstream studies of conflict, war, and international relations more broadly, as they are often dismissed as being difficult to reconcile with rationalist approaches, given that emotions are perceived as 'irrational'. However, without understanding psychological factors, emotions, and emotional motivation, we might never be able to fully understand the nuances of conflict and decisions born out of conflict. This risks the potential of being left in a never-ending negative feedback loop of policy decisions that do not adequately take all factors into account, begetting endless consequences, that require more policy decisions, and so on and so forth.

When considering psychology from a conflict perspective, we need to ask the question of why people fight. Why do otherwise ordinary individuals who, outside the context of their position in the conflict, might never take up arms engage in collective violence on behalf of their group? They do it because of emotions. When people are angry, overcome with sadness, hatred,

resentment, etc. it can motivate them to act in ways they would not have otherwise (Zuercher, 2023). Further, ordinary people can become willing participants in violent behaviour when the violence *they* are experiencing seems never-ending and, from their perspective, more distressing than the violence that they plan to inflict upon others (Littman & Paluck, 2015).

The psychology of violent behaviour is complex, but a way to understand the nuances of it, specifically in this context is through collective violence, and violent groups, such as terrorist organizations. Group identification becomes a primary motivating factor, as does removing the psychological obstacles to violence, making it seem less aversive. Thus, this chapter seeks to provide a psychology of violent behaviour in order to explain the ways in which FMIs and their resulting collateral damage not only provide a motivational foundation for radicalization, but also the ways in which they promote a new sense of identity, and in-group/out-group narratives through collective grievances.

The Aversiveness of Violence

Violence is aversive - ordinary individuals will typically try to avoid engaging in violent behaviour, or intentionally harming others, because most individuals have been socialized to believe that inflicting harm upon other people is wrong. A classic example of this is the Trolley Scenario, wherein people are more likely to "let" five people die, than to physically push the button and therefore be directly responsible for one person's death. This aversiveness has even extended to soldiers on the ground - interviews after World War II found that soldiers would aim above the heads of their enemies, even when faced with open fire themselves, as to avoid causing harm to them (Littman & Paluck, 2015).

Due to this aversiveness, ordinary people will experience stress if they engage in violent behaviour, because there is consideration of the negative outcomes. This can include distress,

from performing smaller-scale harmful acts, and ranges all the way to PTSD for individuals who have been in much higher-scale violent situations, such as former combatants. Countless studies and surveys have demonstrated that there is a positive correlation between combat exposure, and later psychological distress, because violence is not often a desired reaction or preferred choice (Littman & Paluck, 2015).

However, violence begets violence - engaging in violent behaviour *does* make people more likely to engage in future violence as well. Despite the distress that individuals may experience upon committing violent acts, the more persistent and continued the behaviour is, the more desensitized the individual will become - whether it be through repeated exposure, shifting definitions of violence, disengaging from the morals of it, and so forth (Littman & Paluck, 2015). As this happens, the cognitive dissonance fades, and makes future violence easier and less aversive. Definitions may change too, which is seen in war and conflict frequently - violent acts are seen as the norm, or a necessity, making it less difficult to continue engaging. At times, dehumanizing the targets of violence will occur, especially in prolonged conflict, and this makes it easier for the aggressors to act, as they see their targets as being undeserving of moral considerations (Littman & Paluck, 2015). All of this helps to reduce the distress that ordinary people will feel while engaging in violent behaviour, as it helps to justify their participation.

Dominant Emotions in the Discourse

As stated previously, emotions are often cast aside in the discourses within conflict studies and international relations, due to their 'irrationality' in a field dominated by pragmatic and rational paradigms. However, when considering such high-stakes issues, such as the process of radicalization, and the effects of FMIs on that process, emotions cannot be ignored. To provide a basic definition for the purposes of this chapter, emotions are human reactions to

stimuli that have physical, somatic, and cognitive effects. They are learned, and they are based on different perspectives and different socialization processes (Zuercher, 2023). Emotions are also intentional - they are *about* something, or directed *towards* something. Because of this intentionality, they play a major role in every decision-making process. Decision-making is typically modelled as a rational process, especially within political spheres. However, despite the proclaimed rationality, most times it tends to have much more to do with emotion than with an actual cost-benefit analysis (Zuercher, 2023). When one emotion becomes dominant, it will inherently influence the process - and decisions that are made primarily out of fear, anger, hate, or resentment will all look different.

Understanding this is key to understanding how emotions and psychology are major parts of the ways in which collateral damage can lead to radicalization. In situations like FMIs, emotions like anger, hatred, resentment, and fear are not only common, but likely to influence the way individuals act in the wake of the tragedies that inspire these emotions. Thus, the idea of negative dominant emotional decision-making paves the way for violence to become not only less aversive, but less risky, and more likely, and will be essential in understanding the five psychological theories that become the causal mechanisms for this behaviour.

I) The Revenge, Propaganda, Information & Capacity Effects

Collateral damage can be linked to radicalization in four main ways. First, civilians may feel driven to participate in violence after a civilian casualty event because of a desire to avenge specific harm to family, friends, neighbours, etc. (Condra et al., 2010). This is what is known as the *revenge effect,* where people are so aggrieved that they take up arms as their way of 'righting the wrong' to them or the people they care about. Second, because collateral damage makes people feel this way, violence may be higher in areas that see heightened civilian casualties. This

is called the *propaganda effect* - even if people are not directly exposed to civilian casualties, the deaths have the capability to make people angry, which can boost recruitment as a desire to take out this anger on the forces that perpetrated it (Condra et al., 2010). Collateral damage also helps to develop the idea of the 'evil occupier' which can contribute to in-group/out-group narratives, and the idea that there are no other viable solutions than to fight back. Third, collateral damage tends to affect civilian cooperation with the occupying force. Before an attack, locals might have been motivated to work *with* the occupation under the guise of bringing back stability and order, but once there has been a civilian casualty event, the local populations may become angry, beginning to perceive the occupier as a greater threat to their physical security than previously realized and making them less likely to cooperate. This is called the *information effect* - and it can contribute to higher levels of radicalization and terrorist violence because without civilian cooperation, it is harder for the occupying force to predict where the violence might stem from next (Condra et al., 2010). Finally, there is the *capacity effect,* which is the mechanical correlation between civilian casualties and the capacity of the terrorist groups. When the targets are deemed high value, the intervening military action is more likely to employ force in ways that are associated with collateral damage (i.e. drone strikes). While they may eradicate certain targets with these tactics, the unfortunate reality is that the damage they cause in the process has the potential to spawn additional threats, creating a vicious cycle.

Despite knowing that these interventions which cause collateral damage are high predictors of future terrorist activities, it is not enough to only look at the surface level. FMIs are, without a doubt, a huge factor in encouraging extremist behaviour. They limit the solutions people can use to act, and leave affected populations incredibly vulnerable, which allows propaganda and terrorist messaging to thrive and become an attractive solution (Pettinger, 2015,

p. 106). However, this does not explain the *root* of the behaviour - people become motivated when extreme action is perceived as the only choice, and there are psychological considerations, often neglected in the field of international relations, that must be factored into the analysis and explanation of why this happens.

II) The Situationist Perspective

As discussed in Chapter One, the issue of FMIs triggering backlash in the form of increased risk of terrorism has become a mainstream issue, both in political and academic circles. FMIs and the collateral damage that results provoke strong feelings of resentment amongst the people affected, directly and indirectly. The impacts can extend to also include sympathetic observers (Piazza & Choi, 2018). Resentment helps make people more sympathetic to terrorist causes, and gives a push to people who may not have previously been likely to engage in violent behaviour (Piazza & Choi, 2018).

To complement this, there is the situationist perspective, which is focused on the immediate context in which individuals engage violence. The immediate situation that an individual is in can be a powerful force for encouraging violence and violent behaviour from people who perhaps never would have otherwise become violent, or terrorists/extremists (Littman & Paluck, 2015). This idea was adopted by Hannah Arendt in her idea of the 'banality of evil'. Arendt posited that Nazis were merely ordinary people, who were influenced to participate in violence because of certain features of wartime situations (Littman & Paluck, 2015). While she was criticized and accused of humanizing Nazis, her point remains important in understanding that ordinary social processes that occur during conflicts may lead to violence that would not have existed otherwise. Thus, ordinary individuals may commit violence, even if they dislike it.

In order to understand how this makes sense within the context of this paper, it is important to bring the discussion back to collateral damage, and how the aforementioned psychological considerations make sense of the ways in which civilian casualties have become one of the most highly motivating factors in leading to future terrorist attacks. Given the high negative emotions created by civilian casualty events, they have become a key motivating factor for radicalization (Pettinger, 2015, p. 99). It has been documented that when people are aggrieved at the loss of their family, friends, neighbours, peers, etc. they become far more vulnerable to recruitment. But why?

As previously mentioned, the ideas of the revenge effect, and the propaganda effect work alongside emotional decision-making to link civilian casualties to terrorist recruitment. When civilians are seeking to avenge specific harm done to their loved ones, they may be driven to participate in violence against the party committing the harm - otherwise known as the revenge effect (Condra et al., 2010). Further, the areas that see the highest civilian casualties are also likely to see high levels of insurgent violence because these casualties make people angry, and then they act on that anger to return the violence to those who transgressed against them (Condra et al., 2010). This type of violent action becomes a sense of security where individuals want to defend against threats to their people and territory. Even if they have never been predisposed to violence, they are more likely to take up arms after experiencing high civilian casualty events (Choi, 2011, p. 8).

III) Grievance Theory and Radicalization

Building off of the motivational theories that align with collateral damage, it is also important to look at the ways in which marginalization, alienation, and victimization of whole communities - and the resulting perception of discrimination and injustice - can help to

justify/rationalize radicalization and extremist beliefs (Chin, 2015). When communities are subject to FMIs and high civilian casualty events, entire communities can be rendered vulnerable to exploitation. Resentment can be a powerfully motivating emotion, and a major catalyst for violent behaviour, and marginalization of entire groups of people can breed a level of resentment so deep that violent action becomes the easiest 'way out' so to speak (Zuercher, 2023). Isolation, marginalization, perceived or real injustices, and personal fear are some of the biggest drivers behind the radicalization process. Peoples' beliefs about their group and their place in the world shape what they believe, especially in a conflict, because psychological reactions are not random (Chin, 2015). This fact is why it is so important to understand the role that counterterrorism strategies and military offensives play in marginalizing groups of people, and to consider potential unintended impacts (Chin, 2015). Counterterrorism measures favoured by the West rarely offer adequate protection and prevention measures to the affected communities against the radical elements they produce.

As a result of the War on Terror, national security and public safety became the main focus of government policies, which often came at the expense of both human security and human rights (Chin, 2015). This meant that the policies on the ground tended to alienate these communities, and exacerbate growing grievances after witnessing mass casualty events and the destruction of society - all of which inadvertently ended up legitimizing terrorist groups' aims (Chin, 2015). There is a lack of attempts made to either understand or explain the radicalization process within vulnerable communities affected by FMIs - the efforts that are made rarely go beyond simply acknowledging the fact that people who are marginalized and therefore more vulnerable are also at a higher risk (Chin, 2015).

IV) Ingroup/Outgroup Identification: Psychological Biases

Outside the psychology of emotions and motivation, the idea of ingroups and outgroups is one of the most important psychological considerations in understanding the ways in which collateral damage can promote radicalization. The development of this phenomenon begins with the fundamental attribution error, wherein individuals begin to attribute the behaviour of an outside group - the "other" group - to a disproportionate cause (Zuercher, 2023). When this happens, individuals will see their behaviour as normal and rational, but the "other" group's behaviour as outrageous and unfair, and this can eventually lead to seeing the "other" group as evil, or as having no hope for middle ground.

This is where ingroup/outgroup identity formation begins to occur. Under this theory, individuals will form a group - sometimes based on largely shared characteristics like race, religion, sexuality, etc., and sometimes more arbitrarily. Once a group has been formed, and individuals start identifying with it, they begin to overvalue that group - it becomes the 'ingroup' (Zuercher, 2023). This inherently brings in a psychological pattern of bias surrounding the other groups - the 'outgroup(s)' - and it becomes easy to attribute negative emotions to them. Experiments have shown that it is actually quite easy to induce ingroup vs. outgroup motivations and when doing so, hostility towards the outgroup is particularly noticeable (Eswaran & Neary, 2014). Consequently, this also means the ingroup will attribute positive emotions with themselves, creating overconfidence (Zuercher, 2023). This is almost always a two-sided coin: the group that sees themselves as the ingroup sees the outsider, the assailant, or their opponent as the outgroup, and vice versa, and sometimes perception of being the 'outgroup' on a large scale, often through marginalization, is what leads that group to form their own ingroup bias.

This also risks making decisions out of anger and hatred - as these emotions are linked to the idea of 'getting even', especially as a result of resentment (Zuercher, 2023). When a group has been marginalized, it will make them resentful and angry towards the group marginalizing them, causing a desire to 'correct' the wrong, get revenge, or seek justice. Anger can turn into hatred, and drive people even further - this is where dangerous sentiments like wanting to make the outgroup 'disappear', or eradicate it through violent means (Zuercher, 2023). Taking these emotions and turning them into action can begin to perpetrate a feedback loop of violence: atrocities committed by one group can be used to justify the reactionary or retaliatory actions of another group (Zuercher, 2023).

V) Group Identity and Intergroup Conflict Perspective

Group identity is an important part of the psychology of radicalization as well. The idea that individuals *want* to belong to groups and meet basic needs for their sense of belonging and identity is critical to understanding ingroup-outgroup biases and interactions. When individuals feel that they identify with the ingroup, and have a sense of belonging and integration, they are motivated to contribute to the group's objectives and goals (Littman & Paluck, 2015).

Further, when this group is violent, the identification with a violent group increases an individual's motivation to continue perpetrating that violence as well (Littman & Paluck, 2015). The ingroup-outgroup rhetoric helps to contribute to this, and helps with accepting violence as a plausible strategy to further their own desires. Generating outgroup hate is one of the easiest ways to motivate collective violence, because the "us vs. them" mentality demonizes the outgroup and strengthens the ingroup (Littman & Paluck, 2015). Generating this hatred is not difficult, particularly during mass casualty events that result in collateral damage and destruction. The individuals affected see the perpetrators, usually military personnel, and sometimes more

broadly, the country they represent, as the outgroup. Their anger, fear, and resentment towards the collateral damage generated by the outgroup can easily turn into hate, and fuel for violent action through collectivism.

Collectivism, or prioritizing the group over the individual, is a key component of forming ingroup-outgroup biases after FMIs and mass casualty events. The "us vs. them" mindset is utilized to spread the idea that the "us" is good, moral, and right, while the "them" is bad, immoral, and wrong (Schwartz, Dunkel & Waterman, 2008). This can be especially visible when territory, rights, or lives are wrongly taken away - a sense of being collectively affected by something motivates individuals to work together against it. This collectivist mindset is only strengthened when the perceived outgroup is persecuting individuals or societies, or when the outgroup is encroaching on the ingroup's physical or psychological territory. When there is a perceived grievance, combined with prejudice and attempted destruction of specific identities, there is a higher risk for terrorist activities to formulate, as people will want to unite and fight the outgroup, as well as their collective dehumanization (Schwartz, Dunkel & Waterman, 2008).

This is commonly seen in societies where Western countries are the cause for mass suffering, as there may be social undercurrents that help to incite public anger against the West (Schwartz, Dunkel & Waterman, 2008). The West is often categorized as the outgroup by these societies, and blamed for causing direct harm, or supporting specific regimes that have contributed to regional suffering. It is also seen as a threat, and has caused higher levels of discrimination, given the power the West holds, and how easily it can inflict violence on 'less powerful' societies that perpetuates senses of dehumanization, anger, and grievances (Schwartz, Dunkel & Waterman, 2008). Individuals who experience this continually throughout an FMI are also experiencing increased perceptions of threat - this helps in motivation, because when there

is a constant threat of death, individuals will take up any means to prevent this from happening to themselves, or to the people they care about.

This typically results in members of the smaller groups developing a sense of moral superiority over their oppressors - which helps to reinforce the idea that if they use violence to target their oppressors, they are only doing so because it is 'deserved' (Schwartz, Dunkel & Waterman, 2008). This is why the most abhorrent part of terrorism is actually its distinguishing characteristic, *and* why identity is so important (Eswaran & Neary, 2014). People become willing to fight, or die trying, for their ingroup, invoking a feeling of protecting one another, their families, and their country. The willingness to die trying, even when there are extremely low odds of ever winning or doing real damage shows just how important this becomes to people when they feel they have no other choice, and when they can identify collectively through shared suffering and loss (Eswaran & Neary, 2014).

When terrorism comes from a deep sense of offence against identity, life, and freedom, the resulting attacks are often retribution for perceived damage done to the identity, life, or freedoms of those who make up the militant groups (Eswaran & Neary, 2014). Having one's country - which provides a strong sense of identity - invaded or bombarded, watching people die as a result of that, and succumbing to feelings of hopelessness all contribute to personal and group identities feeling threatened. This fear of loss helps to foster indoctrination, and if the individuals are motivated by their idea of 'justice', they will not stop doing so until that sense of justice has been achieved (Schwartz, Dunkel & Waterman, 2008).

The Costs of FMIs & Group Identification

Approaches that ignore the fundamental importance of identity underestimate the potential costs of conflict - this is the current security dilemma at play (Eswaran & Neary, 2014).

If foreign occupations of land, long and large-scale FMIs, and their resulting collateral damage are only perceived as issues of sovereignty and property, and there is ignorance towards the massive assault on identity, people will only become more committed to resistance. Members of persecuted groups have already typically been alienated from power, have no way to effect real change, and given the violence and high rates of casualties they have been exposed to as a result of FMIs, they have a natural tendency to distrust the motivations of the outgroup, and the representations of outgroup institutions (Schwartz, Dunkel & Waterman, 2008). Thus, political avenues and peaceful means of protest as avenues for redressing grievances and getting justice for lost lives and affected societies are not utilized - parallel institutions are instead created in order to serve the interest of the oppressed groups (Schwartz, Dunkel & Waterman, 2008).

The "us vs. them" mentality cannot be forgotten - in the context of conflicts, but specifically within FMIs, the "them" is the conflict with a foreign power, and the "us" is the affected population. Due to the factors discussed, any damage that becomes inflicted upon "them", whether in retribution for aggression, destruction, or death, will be motivated by the satisfaction and gratification it offers *all* members of the group labelled "us" (Eswaran & Neary, 2014). This presence of altruism amongst the ingroup, and in this case amongst the radicalized, is well documented. Leaders and members of terrorist groups are often well respected, and are regarded as patriots and freedom fighters, not criminals or deviants. Thus, resistance against the threats, the crimes, and the destruction these individuals have been subject to is often seen as a public service in the wake of FMIs (Eswaran & Neary, 2014).

In particular, interventions by the West tend to increase funding for terrorist activities *against* the West because identity also helps explain terrorist sympathy (Eswaran & Neary, 2014). Individuals are most sensitive to perceptions of harm and injustice against those with

whom they share an identity. Just as with the motivation for joining terrorist groups, the sympathy can also be highly motivated by the number of casualties in the affected countries - collateral damage cannot be undermined as one of the most critical factors in formulating radical groups and support for such (Eswaran & Neary, 2014). If these factors are ignored, the costs can be considerable for the country enacting the FMIs, even if it is in the name of defending against terrorism (Eswaran & Neary, 2014).

War vs. Terrorism, Ingroup vs. Outgroup

In the counterterrorism/terrorism context, this phenomenon of the ingroup and outgroup is particularly important. The ingroups want differentiation from outgroups - specifically positive distinctiveness. They want to ensure that they are prioritized, and viewed differently than other groups (Passini, Palareti & Battistellli, 2009). Ingroups are more favoured, and likely to perpetrate discrimination against outgroups. As earlier stated, there is an ambiguous definition of terrorism, which can help to legitimize the ingroup and outgroup narratives - oftentimes, the terrorists do not see themselves as terrorists, but as freedom fighters or insurgents who are defending their group, and their people, from outside uses of force, violence, military occupation/operations, etc. (Passini, Palareti & Battistelli, 2009).

To look further into this dynamic, there has to also be attention paid to the representation of terrorism vs. the representation of war - terrorism has become a way to denote outgroup or ‘bad’ military actions and reactions, while war has become a way to denote ingroup or ‘good’ military actions and reactions (Passini, Palareti & Battistelli, 2009). This means that war is easily legitimized from ingroup perspectives, but the opposite can also be true. The opposition and the friction come from the semantic areas - war is seen as justifiable, legitimate, and often encouraged, despite the fact that it is defined as destructive and violent (Passini, Palareti &

Battistelli, 2009). Terrorism is also defined as such, but it is seen as criminal, illegitimate, and unjustifiable. War is seen as rational, comprehensive, and less ambiguous, while terrorism is seen as emotional and primitive, as well as more threatening (Passini, Palareti & Battistelli, 2009). However, war and terrorism do coincide, and share many specific features, despite the semantic and perceived differences. The problem with the differences is that they inadvertently legitimize one type of use of violence - making the resentment, anger, and hatred for the outgroup even stronger amongst affected populations.

Most efforts to reduce the threat of terrorism up until this point have focused on both soft and hard power strategies, but as we know, the most common and most widely seen response is military intervention. Collateral damage and deaths of noncombatants, especially children, through airstrikes and boots on the ground operations can continue to add fuel to the perceived grievances that already existed (Schwartz, Dunkel & Waterman, 2008). The collective identity amongst these groups is so strong that any external military threats to their organizations will likely only end up strengthening them, and increasing the solidarity amongst group members (Schwartz, Dunkel & Waterman, 2008). If real change is going to be made in addressing the radicalization, the underlying grievances that exist and lead to this type of collective violence have to be addressed - the failure to do so means there is a blind eye being turned towards the injustices happening (Schwartz, Dunkel & Waterman, 2008).

CHAPTER THREE: CASE STUDY
THE U.S.-LED WAR ON TERROR

The War on Terror

In order to best illustrate the ways in which the literature and causal mechanisms come together, the War on Terror, with a specific focus on the US invasion of Iraq and its unintended consequences will be examined, in order to gain a deeper understanding of how ISIS emerged as a byproduct of the escalating conflicts brought on by the United States in Iraq, and across the Middle East. After 9/11, American intervention in the Middle East became commonplace, as they carried out military operations in the name of counterterrorism, nation building, and democratizing the political landscape (Thrall & Goepner, 2017). However, it became increasingly clear that American strategy not only destabilized the Middle East, and specifically Iraq for the purposes of this case study, but it also did nothing to protect the United States from terrorism. An inflated assessment of terror-related threats facing the United States led to an aggressive military intervention form of counter-terrorism that did not help or protect Americans As the research has demonstrated, military intervention is not the best way to deal with terrorism and the risk of radicalization, as it tends to cause more threats (Thrall & Goepner, 2017). This case study will examine the ways in which the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) corroborates this, as well as providing contextual evidence for why highly intensive FMIs should not be the primary counter-terrorism strategy, as it tends to create stronger outgroup hate, as well as exacerbating conditions that lead to terrorism, rather than diminishing them.

The US Invasion of Iraq & The Feedback System

The US invasion of Iraq was conducted in 2003, after the National Strategy to Combat Terrorism was declared. President George Bush stated that the primary objective of the strategy was to ensure there were no further terrorist attacks led against the United States after the 9/11

attacks, by creating an international environment that would render terrorism unlikely (Thrall & Goepner, 2017). During this time, Bush implemented the 4-D Strategy: 1) defeat terrorist organizations within global reach; 2) deny terrorist organizations the ability to operate or launch attacks; 3) diminish the conditions that give rise to the use of terrorism; and 4) defend the United States through proactive defence of the homeland (Thrall & Goepner, 2017).

The choice to confront terrorism through military force, instead of through traditional law enforcement frameworks, shaped the 'War on Terror' and its outcomes too. The goal was to kill terrorists, destroy their organizations, and eliminate their ability to conduct other terrorist operations in the future - but it was both preemptive and reactive, and conducted before a threat was even imminent enough to constitute a risk of harm, with the aim that would also be a deterrent if handled this way (Thrall & Goepner, 2017). The invasion of Afghanistan was a 'punishment' for harbouring al-Qaeda, but the same could not be said about Iraq. Rather, it was done as a way to demonstrate strength and resolve on the "central front" (Thrall & Goepner, 2017). The United States also sought to remake or reshape the Middle East in alleged pursuit of long-run and potentially more fundamental and feasible solutions to the root causes of terrorism. While addressing the root is undoubtedly critical, the strategy was more harmful than helpful. Since officials believed that terrorism springs from unhealthy political and economic systems, which is most definitely a motivating factor, the concern was that terrorist groups would flourish where states could not control their own territory (Thrall & Goepner, 2017). This is why the idea of democratization and nation building in Iraq and Afghanistan was proposed. This idea failed.

Mission Not Accomplished

Despite all of these goals and proposed strategies, what does the United States have to show for their efforts? Why is the 'War on Terror' so widely considered a 'failed war'?

Regardless of the fact that the United States has not faced a terrorist attack to the scale of 9/11 since 9/11, there has been no proof to show that the intervention was the reason for this lack of terrorism. Further, there has not even been a dent made in ameliorating the conditions that help to breed terrorism and radicalization - the conditions have only been made worse. More Americans have died from terror attacks, and there have been more attacks on America since 9/11 compared to the period before (Thrall & Goepner, 2017). Terrorist attacks worldwide have also skyrocketed, which is a key indicator that conditions driving terrorism are worse than ever before (Thrall & Goepner, 2017).

The idea that military intervention acted as a deterrent is also false. While it did make a powerful statement for the United States to invade Iraq - essentially saying "if you attack us, our military will attack you, and topple your country's regime" - terrorists have remained undaunted, and perhaps even more motivated after witnessing this (Thrall & Goepner, 2017). This is why a large focus of this case study is to understand how ISIS emerged largely due to the chaos that unfolded in Iraq, and has even used resentment and anger towards American and allied military presence as a recruitment tool (Thrall & Goepner, 2017). It was never a deterrent for them.

All of this begs the question: did the War on Terror fuel more anti-American, or more broadly, anti-West terrorism? Had the United States conducted a limited intervention to disrupt al-Qaeda, withdrawn quickly from Afghanistan, and stayed out of Iraq entirely, a lot of post 9/11 chaos could have been entirely avoided (Thrall & Goepner, 2017). Without an ongoing military presence, and continued active military campaign, it is doubtful that ISIS would have ever existed and grown into what it became, as it has directly used the American presence in the Middle East as a justification for terrorism directed towards America and the West (Thrall &

Goepner, 2017). Thus, we can see the ways in which the War on Terror failed to not only defeat major terrorist activity, but failed to contain the growth of terrorism more broadly as well.

Why U.S. Military Intervention Inflames Terrorism

As seen for many years, the United States often uses the military as a legitimate foreign policy tool to end terrorism in countries where organized terrorist networks exist (Choi, 2011, p. 6). However, the destabilizing effects that FMIs have on the local population can increase domestic and international terrorism, because when dealing with foreign military forces, the target country has fewer means to devote to the security and policing of their populations to help prevent radical groups from forming (Choi, 2011, p. 7). In the end, this makes the target country far more capable of harbouring terrorists than curbing them, which is something that terrorist groups can take advantage of.

Further, the American military interventions have incited retaliatory terrorist attacks, largely cited as being in part to their military strategy, which exaggerates civilian death and collateral damage (Choi, 2011, p. 7). This can allow for a weaponized sense of nationalistic anger against the United States to develop as a fallout of the collateral damage. There has also been a common sentiment that American military intervention has provided opportunities for deep feelings of oppression, anger regarding imperialism, and unjustified subjugation to be used as recruiting tools into radical groups because people are so angry about their conditions (Choi, 2011, p. 8). These tangible examples can be explained by the revenge effect, proposed by Condra, as well as the grievance theory, as emotions and oppression become manipulated into violent action. Unfortunately, these sentiments make it especially easy to manipulate young populations to fight, because it seems like it is the only feasible option for them to defend themselves, their homeland, their family, their freedom, etc. (Choi, 2011, p. 8). In a sense, it

becomes its own sense of national security - the perceived threat of the outsider, or outgroup, to their safety/livelihood and the perceived danger to their homeland can motivate individuals to take up arms and defend their territory (Choi, 2011, p. 8).

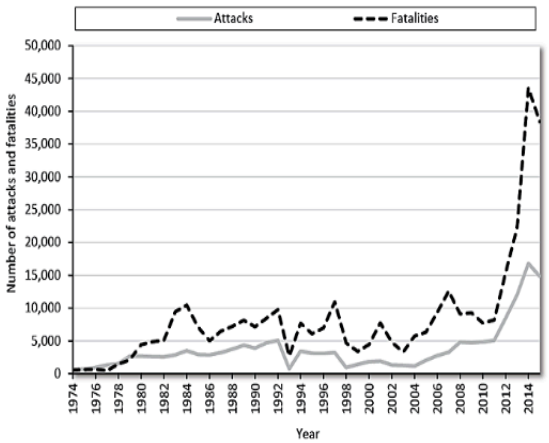
Terrorism is also often seen as a means to an end - those involved tend to see it as the only logical way to get out of these situations (Choi, 2011, p. 8). There is a foreign force oppressing daily life, disintegrating infrastructure and society, and creating a hostile atmosphere, which can lead people to believe that there is no other way out for them, which can be understood psychologically through the grievance theory. Further, if the terrorists perceive the state/intervening power as unjust, morally corrupt, and violent, then their own violence against the intervening power will seem legitimate and justified. This is a primary example of ingroup-outgroup biases, as well as demonstrating that when there is a sense of assault towards a group or collective identity, grievances can push individuals to act in radical ways, and to dehumanize their targets in the process to make violence less aversive (Choi, 2011, p. 9). It is an amalgamation of each of the psychological theories raised in Chapter Two, which demonstrates just how dangerous it is to launch FMIs without full consideration of the effects that they will have on the civilians on the ground.

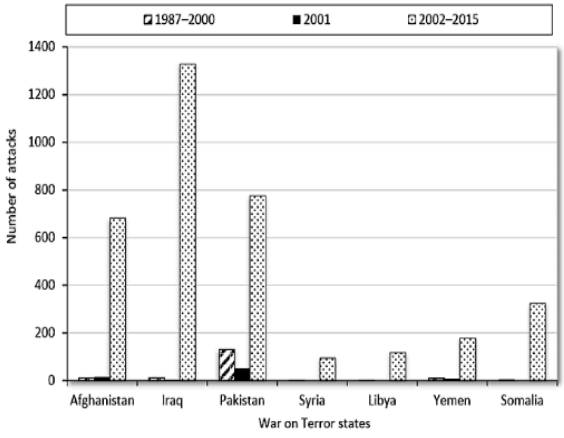
Many American officials have admitted that there is a link between their intervention and increased rates of terrorism. However, even post 9/11, US policymakers have learned the wrong lessons over and over again. Instead of trying to shrink the defence perimeter and minimize collateral damage, the Bush administration expanded it, having catastrophic effects (Eland, 2007). Preventative attacks and preventative American foreign policy in Iraq also demonstrates the desire to maintain and assert continual military superiority in the region, in order to dissuade

any rising radicals and non-state actors from challenging the United States - however, this attitude has only inflamed terrorist groups and their motivations (Eland, 2007).

What We Know From Afghanistan and Iraq

In order to connect these findings more broadly to the literature cited in Chapter One, we can use the long-run trends from Afghanistan and Iraq to help provide insight and background into the ways in which the FMI conducted in Iraq by the United States was so counterproductive. The trends within Afghanistan show that civilian casualties influenced both recruitment into terrorist groups, and population disaffection - essentially meaning that the civilian casualties experienced as a result of the FMI became a terrorist recruitment strategy, likely through the propaganda and revenge effects (Condra et al., 2010). There was also a positive relationship seen between civilian casualties and levels of future violence - thus, the violence inflicted upon civilians became a greater predictor of future violence and radicalization (Condra et al., 2010). Similar trends were observed in Iraq, with the main difference being that the counter-violence and transition to radicalization was less long-term and occurred shortly after the civilian casualties (Condra et al., 2010). This is helpful as a comparison, as it determines whether the patterns observed were particular to one specific FMI or if this can be seen as a more general trend. In this case, it is the latter.





Further, prior to 9/11, terror attacks rarely occurred in the seven countries - Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Syria, Libya, Yemen, and Somalia - where the United States executed military operations as part of the War on Terror, including invasions or air-strikes (Thrall & Goepner, 2017). The graphs above demonstrate that terrorist attacks rose 1900% in the seven countries, most notably in Iraq (Thrall & Goepner, 2017).

The United States also failed to diminish the conditions that its government argued produce terrorism - Iraq and Afghanistan have become even more corrupt since American intervention, their places as the worst and second worst on the State Fragility Index did not change, and political and civil liberties did not improve over the course of the War on Terror (Thrall & Goepner, 2017). Further, these military occupations tended to radicalize local populations and bred the growth and development of insurgencies (Thrall & Goepner, 2017).

There were several major flaws to the American approach with the War on Terror. The primary issue was the reliance on military means - this is rarely ever the path towards finding a permanent solution for eradicating terrorist groups (Thrall & Goepner, 2017). American efforts have only ever produced short-term effects, and in the long-term have produced more threats against their own homeland. The United States could not "kill its way out" of the war against terrorism, and in trying to do so only made things worse (Thrall & Goepner, 2017). There was so much chaos unleashed from the American presence in the Middle East, which generated more anger and resentment towards the United States - and the resentment did not only come from those already involved in terrorist groups. The public opinions of the United States across the Middle East more broadly have plummeted after the invasion of Iraq, making the risk of increased resentment as a motivational factor more widespread (Thrall & Goepner, 2017).

Further, the idea that American leaders could reshape the politics of other nations was a massive oversight. Both the Bush and Obama administrations believed that terrorism emerged in part or whole from factors like poverty, deprivation, and inability to be engaged in the political process (Thrall & Goepner, 2017). Though these are definitely motivating factors, the United States' response was flawed and taking a nation-building/forced democratization strategy only increased resentment and the perceived assault on identity, furthering the idea of the "evil outgroup" that needed to be eradicated from their country. Additionally, the United States' approach to impose democracy via military means failed, as there is no evidence that they should or could make this happen (Thrall & Goepner, 2017).

ISIS as a Blowback Effect

After drawing on these trends, along with the preliminary research into the ways in which the invasion of Iraq was a motivating feature for radicalization, there is ample reason to assume that if it were not for Bush's decision to invade and occupy Iraq, as well as to use military bombardment as a primary counterterrorism strategy, ISIS would likely have never existed. American officials found that in many cases, less intervention in the Middle East contributed to maintaining the stability of the region, but post 9/11 this idea was ignored (Israeli, 2023). The seeds that eventually gave way to the rise of ISIS were sown after the US-led operations in Iraq, in 2003 (Israeli, 2023). There were pre-existing ideas of reinstating the Caliphate - or Islamic State - but the interventions were the reason these ideas caught fire: In 2004, the precursor to ISIS - al-Qaeda in Iraq - was formed to fight the U.S. troops and their local allies (Thrall & Goepner, 2017). ISIS then evolved from al-Qaeda in Iraq as a direct response (Israeli, 2023).

To step back for a moment, there are many decisions that influence foreign policy outcomes, and the hope of achieving a particular goal does not always go to plan (Israeli, 2023).

The assumption in many of these choices is that there is a single factor at play, and all other factors remain constant or unchanging, but this is not a useful assumption because this is not possible (Israeli, 2023). No foreign policy decision is the result of single variables - there are multiple, and sometimes countless variables that interact, and actors are always consciously responding to the behaviour of others (Israeli, 2023). Emotions are a complexity that are typically ignored in the foreign policy world, but how people respond to certain policy decisions is often direct retaliation to how they are treated.

An important feature to note is that following the US invasion of Iraq, Prime Minister and dictator Saddam Hussein was removed from power, and the Iraqi army was disbanded and destroyed (Israeli, 2023). This placed the country in turmoil and societal collapse, and left a significant power vacuum in its wake. 500,000 individuals were discharged and dismissed from their positions in the armed forces, intelligence agencies, and civilian administration branches of the military (Israeli, 2023). As a result, all of these people with fighting backgrounds were left suddenly jobless and without income. Terrorist groups were able to fill this vacuum, and rise to prominence and power - the Islamic State was well funded, could pay its fighters a high salary, offered them food and shelter, and also a sense of identity and purpose.

This became a *highly* motivating factor for the unemployed militants to join the ranks, especially when the United States had morphed from a liberator into an occupier within a matter of weeks (Thrall & Goepner, 2017). In Fallujah, which later became one of ISIS's strongholds, American troops opened fire on a crowd of people protesting a school closure in April 2003 - hardly a month after the invasion began, killing and wounding dozens of Iraqis. This was only the beginning - the shootings, airstrikes, torture, and general chaos helped to drive thousands of Iraqis into the arms of radicals as retaliation for the brutality unleashed on them and their people

(Thrall & Goepner, 2017). Further, the US military detained tens of thousands of Iraqis, many of whom were noncombatants and civilians, at Camp Bucca in southern Iraq, where many previously imprisoned jihadis were able to radicalize new recruits (Clack & Johnson, 2018). Individuals who were thrown into detention centres without reasonable suspicion of committing any crimes became motivated to strike back at those responsible, thus planning future attacks and operations together. American soldiers even stated their concern that Camp Bucca was becoming a "pressure cooker" for extremism, rather than just holding detainees (Clack & Johnson, 2018). The individuals within these environments were able to form their own ingroups, based on anger and hatred for the outgroup that had detained them - often wrongfully so.

The environment created by the US FMI in Iraq allowed these seeds to be both planted, and to grow - and slowly ISIS grew to power as a consequence of Western upstreaming across Iraq (Clack & Johnson, 2018). A research study was conducted to determine the motivations for why individuals across Iraq decided to join ISIS, and there were several main categories they were grouped into based on the reasoning they provided for joining. Each of these categories help to demonstrate the ways in which the American-led FMI interacted with emotions and psychology to produce the output of ISIS. Some of the main groupings were those motivated by identity - called identity seekers. These individuals cited feeling isolated and alienated, as well as feeling like outsiders in their environment, pushing them to find identity within a group (Turner, 2015). Another important category are the revenge seekers - those who consider themselves a part of a group being oppressed by the West, and thus are acting out of motivation to enact revenge against the West for placing them under conditions of marginalization (Turner, 2015). There are also the justice seekers, who similarly to the revenge seekers, are responding to what they perceive as injustice. They are working to avenge the perceived injustice, and this becomes

their “raison d’etre” (Turner, 2015). Finally, there are the death seekers. These individuals were those who had suffered significant trauma and loss in their lives, and had reached a point where death was seen as the only way out, with a reputation as a martyr for the cause, rather than someone who had merely committed suicide (Turner, 2015). Coalescing with these findings for motivation is the fact that throughout the invasion, the total estimated deaths of Iraqi civilians is 280,771–315,190, which is a massive level of collateral damage stemming from a proposed goal of stopping terrorism and imposing a new rule of democracy. Witnessing this level of mass casualty has long been understood as a hugely motivating factor for joining ISIS (Turner, 2015).

These findings help to illustrate the ways in which the psychological theories raised hold true - the idea of revenge and anger as motivation, both because of grievances and because of marginalization/oppression ties into both the four effects proposed by Condra, as well as the grievance theory. The identity-based motivation stemming from anger demonstrates the theory of group identification, and ultimately ingroup/outgroup biases. Each of the major theories are intertwined with one another - it is a matrix of complex and intersecting factors, and not a vertical pathway from one emotion to the next, and eventually to radicalization. In this case, each causal mechanism enforced the ingroup/outgroup bias until it had escalated beyond what could have ever been predicted.

ISIS and the Outgroup

There are several incidents throughout the time that ISIS had a stronghold that illustrate just how powerful the desire for revenge against the outgroup can be. Faisal Shahzad, who attempted to set off a bomb in Times Square in 2010 illustrates these dynamics of motivation. In court, he explained his actions by stating "I want to plead guilty 100 times because unless the United States pulls out of Afghanistan and Iraq, until they stop drone strikes in Somalia, Pakistan

and Yemen and stop attacking Muslim lands, we will attack the United States and be out to get them." (Clack & Johnson, 2018). Further, at its height, ISIS produced several videos that broadcasted the beheading of Western, often American, journalists and aid workers. Specifically, in August 2014, a four minute and forty-second video was released titled 'A Message to America' - the contents of which contained images of the gruesome murder of American journalist James Foley by ISIS fighters (Friis, 2015). The insurgent condemns the actions of the American government in Iraq and Syria, before announcing that the execution was a direct response to the airstrikes that President Obama had authorized against militants in Iraq (Friis, 2015). The strikes were meant to protect the safety of Iraqi civilians, and American diplomats and military advisors who were based in Erbil. However, ISIS members saw this as a perceived threat to their identity and livelihood, and retaliated quickly by distributing the images of Foley's dead body.

The video ended with another American hostage, photojournalist Steven Sotloff, kneeling, while the ISIS insurgent warned Obama that "the life of this American citizen depends on your next decision" (Friis, 2015). This was not an empty threat - just over two weeks later, a similar video that showed the beheading of Sotloff was released, followed by three additional videos of two British aid workers, and an American aid worker, all of whom met the same fate (Friis, 2015). These videos were incredibly barbaric, and were widely condemned by American and British government institutions. Further, all the videos had substantial impacts on both American and British foreign policy - there has been much speculation in the wake of these incidents as to whether the United States and United Kingdom would have carried out anything beyond "pinprick strikes" in the time after the beheading videos were broadcasted (Friis, 2015).

Empirical Findings

The main findings from this case study are that American FMIs have created widely undesirable consequences, while inflaming terrorism and strengthening terrorist networks, which not only resulted in more innocent lives lost, but in damaging the image of the United States as a global defender of freedom and democracy. It has given the affected countries' leaders a chance to demonize the United States, and increase terrorist events in the target country (Choi, 2011, p. 14). There is a very reciprocal relationship with American FMIs and the terrorism that occurs as a result. They enforce and reinforce one another - the presence of terrorism causes foreign intervention, but intervention through aggressive military means can be a primary motivating factor for more terrorism (Choi, 2011, p. 17). There are, of course, always other factors that also serve as motivation, however in the presence of largely destructive FMIs, these other factors can coagulate and erupt into something incredibly dangerous.

The American claims of deploying armed forces abroad to 'preserve world peace and prosperity' while also defending national security interests is heavily misguided, because intention aside, the effects that these FMIs produce are far more dangerous (Choi, 2011). Despite claims from supporters that the War on Terror's use of military strategy was the optimal method to fight terrorism post-9/11, many were skeptical of the efficacy. 9/11 itself happened largely as a response to American military presence in the Middle East, and aggressive FMIs, which was already concrete evidence for understanding that by fighting fire with fire, there would be intensified risk of more terrorist attacks (Choi, 2011).

The empirical results have shown that American military intervention, in general, tends to produce counterproductive effects. The use of specific terrorist pursuits can successfully deter future terrorism, but large-scale intervention missions are instigators for future violence because

they end up attacking far more than just terrorists (Choi, 2011). Therefore, the biggest problem is the indiscriminate military interventions led by the United States, that allow existing motivational factors or existing radicals to exploit destabilized local political systems, economies, societies, and identities into the formation of ingroups that see acts of terror as the natural retribution for the suffering they have experienced.

The American foreign policy community, and sometimes the American public as well, avoid the acceptance that American actions overseas could result in any type of blowback (Eland, 2007). Often, the argument that United States military interventions lead to increased anti-American terrorism is accused of being 'victim blaming' instead of a reflection on how to improve counterterrorism strategy for better safety internationally. This means there is a need for more introspection - despite the harm it has faced, American actions overseas *do* still have consequences (Eland, 2007). What tends to happen in the wake of this debate is that those who attack the United States are deemed so evil that there is no point in examining their motives before retaliating. However, as this paper has aimed to do, understanding the motivation and the ways in which FMIs can produce ingroup biases that threaten both America, and the West as a whole, can help to provide more structured decision-making in security policy, if the security of the state and its people is to ever be actually prioritized.

Main Takeaways: Stepping Back From the War on Terror

There are three basic strategic options for the future of dealing with current and potential variants of terrorism: 1) the current course can be maintained, with the hope that one day there will actually be containment and defeat of terrorist groups; 2) increase American commitment to the maintenance of security in specific 'threat designated' countries; or 3) step back from the fight, reduce levels of military intervention in the face of a threat, stop trying to nation build, and

end efforts to dictate political outcomes in the Middle East (Thrall & Goepner, 2017). The United States, nor any other country, has the ability to rid the world of all terrorist organizations, eliminate *all* conditions that help them form, or prevent groups from finding new safe havens in which to conduct operations (Thrall & Goepner, 2017).

Rather than continuing on with failed attempts to bomb an ideology away, which is both impossible and counterproductive, there needs to be more support provided to affected states or high risk areas for counterterrorism efforts. Attacking at rogue only makes unnecessary enemies, and the inability for the United States to minimize collateral damage in the War on Terror only threw kerosene on the flames of American hatred - people flocked to the cause (Eland, 2007). Taking a lower military profile overseas in the wake of future threats would be a strong decision, as the US's excessive response to the 9/11 attacks played right into the hands of terrorists (Eland, 2007). Fighting terrorism has historically been a job for intelligence services and law enforcement - not the military. It would serve the security agenda far better to return to this style of approach as the baseline response to threat, and use limited and discretionary military means only in the face of more severe and imminent threats (Thrall & Goepner, 2017).

The Way Forward

The findings from this case study help to demonstrate a cause-and-effect relationship, one that is also influenced by a multitude of factors, but a relationship that exists and is mutually reinforcing nonetheless. The understanding of these findings is crucial in order to continue assessing the effectiveness of foreign policy decisions and security measures. The goal should be to engage in more nuanced and evidence-based considerations about FMIs, with psychological effects of consequences considered, in order to prevent backlash and future radicalization wherever possible.

It is necessary for policymakers to fully understand the potential ramifications of their choices concerning overseas military interventions on the landscape of terrorism. With this understanding, policymakers can exercise better decision-making about the timing, methods, and overall necessity of future military intervention in foreign conflict. Engaging in more informed decision-making enables policymakers to tailor strategies that mitigate unintended repercussions, and still optimizing counterterrorism measures. Moreover, in making such considerations, international relations as a whole would benefit. The interconnectedness of the decisions made by one state and the ripple effects that these decisions have on the security environment and stability for states across the world cannot be ignored, and should be an important consideration in future decisions.

Further, having a better grasp of the factors that contribute to radicalization and the emergence of terrorism is essential to helping prevent it in the future. When policymakers are aware of the psychological factors, including emotions and grievances, perceived injustices, group identity, and ingroup/outgroup narratives, the root cause of the issue may be more likely to be addressed, or at the very least, considered in policy choices. When there is more awareness of the blowback effects of FMIs, other strategies, such as diplomacy, aid, targeted military interventions only, or a return to a more law-enforcement based approach, can be considered as more primary focuses in counterterrorism strategy. Further, rather than relying on military means alone, a more holistic approach can be adopted to address root causes of terrorism on the ground, such as development work that works to achieve better equality and lessen marginalization. Without questioning the strategies that are always used, but that never seem to work, the true beginnings of radicalization may never be addressed, and the cycle will only continue.

CONCLUSIONS

Summary & Conclusions

The goal of this paper was to study the ways in which the intricate relationship between foreign military interventions and terrorism underscores both the complexities and issues in modern international relations. As our world becomes increasingly interconnected, geopolitical rivalries, regional conflicts, and transnational threats have heightened the scrutiny and debate surrounding the impact of military interventions on terrorist activities.

Throughout the literature review, it could be seen that the deployment of military forces by a foreign nation into another nation's sovereign territory holds far-reaching implications that extend beyond just immediate security concerns, even when the intervention is done in the name of security. At the heart of this discourse is the interplay between state actions, terrorist organizations, and how the socio-political landscape in which they operate and engage one another is intricately linked to psychological motivations for action.

To properly understand the impact of foreign military interventions on terrorism, international relations cannot only look at the issue from a security studies standpoint, or from a classic international relations perspective. There has to be inclusion of the less 'rational' elements - i.e. the psychology of emotions, motivations, and identity formation - when looking at the decision-making processes of terrorism in the wake of an FMI. Through an analysis of the causal mechanisms, it can be seen that FMIs heighten the risk of radicalization and participation in terrorist activity due to their highly destructive impact on civilian life, sovereignty, and social/political infrastructure. The collateral damage and assault on identity stemming from these events tends to be especially motivating, as it facilitates the action of ingroup/outgroup formation, and the biases that occur as a result.

The contemporary case of the War on Terror serves as a pertinent example of the issues above, showcasing both the intended and unintended consequences of military interventions in combating terrorism. While such interventions may disrupt certain terrorist networks and their capabilities in the short term, they can also inadvertently fuel radicalization, resentment, and recruitment, thereby perpetuating a cycle of violence, which was seen in the formation of ISIS. The psychological considerations that emerge from military interventions play a crucial role in shaping the responses of terrorist organizations. Perceptions of foreign occupation, injustice, and oppression can serve as powerful catalysts for radicalization and extremist violence, highlighting the need for a comprehensive understanding of the psychological dynamics at play.

In light of these complexities, it is imperative for policymakers, practitioners, and scholars to engage in interdisciplinary collaboration and evidence-based analysis to develop more effective strategies for countering terrorism. Rather than solely relying on military force, efforts should prioritize addressing the root causes of terrorism, promoting good governance, socio-economic development, and fostering inclusive societies to address problems on the ground first and foremost. Furthermore, international cooperation and dialogue are essential for mitigating the threat posed by terrorism and fostering global peace and security. By drawing on empirical evidence and interdisciplinary perspectives, we can enhance our understanding of the complex dynamics underlying this critical issue and work towards sustainable solutions that uphold principles of sovereignty, human rights, and justice.

A better approach must be imminent. The hundreds and thousands of lives lost as not only a result of terrorism, but also as a result of failed counterterrorism strategy cannot be and should not be boiled down to mere “collateral damage” - every single casualty was someone with goals, hopes, and dreams for a better future. We must demand better from our institutions to

ensure that this level of mass destruction does not end up continually repeated, and we must do better as scholars and academics too to use the tools we have available to research the shortcomings of policy decisions, and provide actionable recommendations for the future. The failure to address psychological motivations and root causes will only ensure that this cycle, which is both its own end and beginning, continues to perpetuate more and more harm. We cannot continue to try and bomb away ideologies that took root, in part, because of a bomb.

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