

Living with Terrorism

Session: Session 3

Date/Time: April 27, 2015 / 10:45-12:15

Moderator: David Sanger, The New York Times

Speakers: Joseph Kéchichian, King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies
Alon Levkowitz, Bar-Ilan University
Ouyang Wei, National Defense University, People's Liberation Army, China
James Przystup, National Defense University, U.S.

Session Sketch

Session 3, titled “Living with Terrorism” discusses the definition of international terrorism and whether acts of terrorism are in fact at the heart of the new normal. We are living in an era that is witnessing the rise of terrorist groups such as ISIS and state sponsored terrorism. It is no longer sufficient to deal with terrorism using traditional means of counter-terrorism tools. Mr. David Sanger, the moderator of the session, asks the following questions: What is the definition of terrorism? How can the international community contain or stop the cycle of terrorism? And can the international community offer an alternative model of societal order that reduces the appeal of terrorism?

Dr. Joseph Kéchichian from King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies states that terrorism will continue and there is a new normal that is creeping into our lives. So rephrasing the question, what can the international community do to contain terrorism? Is there a way to cope with challenges of terrorism? It is important to accept the dangers of terrorism because we are powerless in deterring people who are determined to sacrifice their own lives for terrorist acts. However, it is critical not to exaggerate the threats of terrorism. Can the international community offer an alternative model of social order? One approach is to reduce and abandon imperial conquests, torture and meaningless drone assassinations. In other words, reducing brutality will help to end perpetual wars.

**The views expressed herein are summaries and may not necessarily reflect the views of the speakers or their affiliated institutions.*

Dr. Alon Levkowitz from Bar-Ilan University mentions several difficulties in the fight against terrorism. First is the disagreement surrounding the definition of terrorism. For instance, what is the distinction between terrorists and freedom fighters? A second difficulty is associated with the dual use of explosives. At present, it is increasingly easy to make bombs from websites. Third, there is an issue of recruiting locals. Many individuals who have committed a terror attack were recruited from Europe or North America through the internet. This relates to the fourth problem when these individuals return to their homelands and pose a threat to their own country. The above mentioned difficulties in fighting against terrorism render the issue much more complex and difficult to solve.

Professor Ouyang Wei from National Defense University of the People's Liberation Army in China, examines Chinese perspective of terrorism and extremist ideology. He believes that the definition of terrorism belongs to the non-traditional security and non-state actors. He mentions the critics of China who argue that China has adopted the language of terrorism by the international community and use it to pursue a cleansing program against dissident groups. However, terrorists pose threats to China as separatist and extremists seek independence through terrorist acts and it should be dealt with in two dimensions; first, it should be dealt with domestically to prevent instability from secessionist movements. Second, China should join the international community to counter international terrorism.

Dr. James Przystup of National Defense University in U.S, emphasizes terrorism, North Korea and the new normal. He focuses on state actors in terrorism or state-sponsored terrorism as evidenced by North Korea. Terrorist threats posed by North Korea fall in three categories. First, terrorist attacks directed against the North Korean People. The North Korean regime frequently commits human rights violations against its own people for submission. Second, terrorist attacks against the international community by evading sanctions and transferring nuclear technologies. Third, terrorist acts against South Korea, Japan and the U.S. There have been attempts in the past to change the state's internal dynamics but unfortunately, these efforts have not been very successful.

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