



2018 HAWAII UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES  
STEAM - SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENGINEERING, ARTS, MATHEMATICS & EDUCATION  
JUNE 6 - 8, 2018 PRINCE WAIKIKI, HONOLULU, HAWAII

## TERRORISM AND THE MILITARY INSTITUTION: HOW DO YOU JUSTIFY MILITARY ATROCITIES?



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## **Terrorism and the Military Institution: How do you Justify Military Atrocities?**

### **Synopsis:**

The role of the military institution, since its inception, is to protect and defend the society it serves. Unfortunately, over the years, the military as an institution has become a threat to societies with its technological advancement and financial investments by nations globally continue to soar. This means societies regularly fund ways to perfect military atrocities by justifying the institution's actions. As the Chinese philosopher, Mo Ti, asked about two thousand years ago, when will military killing be considered a murder instead of rewarding the killers? Individuals such as Napoleon Bonaparte (France), Jerry John Rawlings (Ghana), Iddi Amin (Uganda), Francisco Franco (Spain), Muammar al-Qaddafi (Libya), Augusto Pinochet (Chile) and many other coup makers have used the institution to ascend to power through military coups and have terrorised their own citizens. Additionally, powerful nations such as the United States, Israel, and Russia use their military might to threaten weaker ones and the former are more likely to justify their atrocities: For example, British colonization relied on its military to control the colonized. The underlying question is: Has the military become a tool for terrorism? Or should military crimes not be considered acts of terrorism?

## **Terrorism and the Military Institution: How do you Justify Military Atrocities?**

### **Abstract**

Academic publication on terrorism soared after the attack on the United States of America on September 11, 2001 (9/11). Since then the narratives of terrorism, however, have focused on the definitions of terrorism as if it is a recent occurrence. Arguably, terrorism is not a new phenomenon but the problem of terrorism resides in its definition. This article critically explores the military as tool terrorism and how it has become the weapon of choice for political leaders who use the military to terrorize weaker societies and nations. Conceptualizing terrorism depends on which framework one utilizes to define it. The use of different prisms to define a crime has contributed to lack of global acceptance of what constitutes terrorism. It is also a conundrum when a powerful society or nation legitimizes its atrocities against weaker one through the use of former's military power. This, unfortunately, has led to the subjectiveness of every attempt in the literature to objectively provide an acceptable definition of terrorism. This article looks at a brief history of the military as an institution and how it has and continues to be used as an instrument of terrorism by politicians and nations. The paper concludes that all parties are guilty of terrorism and no one nation's military institution is better than the other as they are engaged in killings.

## **Introduction**

While no nation is immune from acts of terrorism, all nations through their military institutions perfect how they can terrorise each other. For example, citizens of the United States America (US), arguably, used to believe that they were protected from terror by oceans until the attacks of September 11, 2001 (9/11). Given the geo-location and the natural design of the earth, many nations have never been afforded the luxury of such delusions. Since the genesis of recorded history nations have been subjected to the destruction and violence associated with acts of terrorism using their militia, military, or *asafos*<sup>1</sup> to professionally engage in well-orchestrated atrocities (terrorism) in the name of defence or protecting their colonies. Terrorism is seen as a socially constructed term with multiple definitions, which may originate from a variety of sources and directions given how individuals, societies, cultures, or nations define the term. There are several types of terrorism in the academic literature, which include but not limited to: civil disorder, political terrorism, non-political terrorism, quasi-terrorism, limited political terrorism, and state sponsored terrorism such as occupation, slavery, and colonization. This paper concerns itself primarily with political and state terrorism, as it examines the definitions of terrorism, and its relationship to the military as an institution, which trains to kill and destroy.

The paper begins by tracing the history of terrorism as an act and a concept. It tries to explicate the various definitions of terrorism and the conundrum of reaching international consensus on defining the term. Additionally, the paper traces the origins of

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<sup>1</sup> These are indigenous militia groups formed by local tribes to protect the various clans. They police or act as the military to defend the interest of a given society and fight wars when necessary. They protect their chiefs and indigenous populations by terrorizing enemy groups and societies.

the military as an institution and examines its the role in terrorism. This article culminates in the examination of the relationship between terrorism and the military and why military force would never end terrorism since the institution itself is guilty of what it claims to be fighting against. The term military, army, or soldiers is used broadly and interchangeably to include the navy, air force, and infantry, in fact, all branches of the military. Additionally, the military is discussed, as one global institution therefore there is no difference between the US, Iran, Iraq, the British, South Africa, Ghana, North Korea, or the Chinese military. While the differences among the various institutions as a “matter of interpretation” might differ from country to country, the didactic history of the military’s doctrine and “general rational” are theoretically, and arguably, the same (Hoiback 2013, 25).

### **Brief History of Terrorism: An Overview**

The nature of terrorism has evolved since its fledging beginnings. That is, the history or origin of terrorism could be as old as when humans started employing violence against each other’s behavior. There is this idea in the literature where scholars argue that modern terrorism began with the French Revolution- a period of social and political upheaval from 1789 to 1799- and has been evolving since then. I argue strongly that terrorism may be traced to the genesis of creation and its shared causes or goals have never changed. Some of these common causes may include but not limited to land ownership, cultural differences, globalization, religion, Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the US invasion of Iraq, the USSR invasion of Afghanistan, colonization, slavery, national and political sovereignty.

In 70 AD, Josephus Flavius referred to a sect of Jewish zealots named the *Sicarii* who used assassinations as a tactic in the Jewish rebellion against Rome (Fine 2010, 271-273). Kaplan (2011:104-106) maintains this was the first recorded case of terrorism. The *Sicarii* were organized by Judas of Galilee who incited people to revolt against tyranny of the Roman Empire financial enslavement (Zeitlin 1965:302-303). However, the *Sicarii* did not limit their aggression to the Roman state, even going so far as to attack those civilians who willingly submitted to the authority of Rome (Smith 1971). The *Sicarii* felt their acts against the Judeans were justified because they did not agree with their political aspirations. In fact, it was the Jews who first attempted to name the use of terror in a political context (Fine 2010), though it was the Assyrians who first developed the terminology for the use of political and military means to inspire terror (271-273).

While terrorism might be going on for political reasons and accomplishments in the eyes of the political leaders, this is perhaps the first instance where terror was seen as evil act with negative connotation. However, during the French Revolution, the term “terrorism” had a deadly positive connotation (Hoffman 2006). The concept of terror employed as a political idea, was first utilized by the French legislature in order to “suppress the aristocratic threat to the revolutionary government” (Bahan 2009: 336). The leader of the so-called “reign of terror”, Robespierre, “stands apart as the first politician to organize and mobilize the resources of a modern nation to systematically eradicate his opponents” by terrorism and dehumanizing them (Fine 2010, 278-280). Robespierre’s *regime de la terreur* (reign of terror) shares at least two familiar characteristics in common with what may be described as the modern day acts of terrorism. First the “reign of terror” (the use of the military) was well organized and second, its goal and

justification were the creation of a “new and better” society in place of a fundamentally corrupt system (Hoffman 2006,16-18). Differing from their successors, the leaders of the reign of terror typically shirked intentional military attacks against innocent civilians in order to maintain “political legitimacy” (Bahan 2009: 336) similar to nations such as the US, Great Britain, France, Germany, Spain, Portugal, and others that engaged in *legalized* occupation, slavery, and colonization. Their activities had state endorsement and the structural organization of their atrocities was chronologically mapped out. Robespierre believed that “...terror without which virtue is powerless” (Fine 2010, 278).

### **Indigenous People, Wars, and Terrorism**

Until the eve of the First World War I (WWI), terrorism retained its revolutionary connotation, however, by the 1930s, terrorism was commonly used to describe the practice of mass repression in totalitarian states, used by dictatorial leaders against their own citizens (Hoffman 2006, 20-23), a practice that became so common in most African countries after gaining political independence from the evils of slavery and colonization. Joseph Stalin (1879-1953), for instance, unleashed the “Great Terror” upon Russia and meant to “seize total power by terrorist action” (25). However, this connotation did not last much past WWII, after which the meaning of terror changed again. One of the big gaps in tracing the origin of terrorism and what constitute terrorism is the focus on authoritarian and dictatorial regimes to the neglect of democratic societies such as the Great Britain (treatment of the natives in the colonized or occupied countries), for example, the US (Native American Indians) and others who equally terrorised the natives they colonized and enslaved (Matthews 2002) such as the Portuguese in Brazil or Spain in South American countries (Fausto 1999). In the post-WWII era, those considered terrorists

began targeting innocent civilians as means to “inspire media coverage and effect political change in targeted governments” (Bahan 2009, 337). It became the norm for violence to be actively used in nations not directly involved in conflicts, in which innocent civilians were attacked for political reasons.

The concept of terrorism in a revolutionary context expanded in the 1960s and 1970s, to include ethnic separatist groups, the disenfranchised, or exiled nationalist minorities- though these groups often rejected the label, terrorists, preferring instead to be referred to as liberators or “freedom fighter” (Hoffman, 2006). In the 1940s-1960s individuals and groups in colonized African countries that began to fight for their political independence were not only seen as dangerous and terrorists groups but also were the targets of the colonizers (Elkins 2005: Anderson 2005). By the 1980s, terrorism evolved to new dimensions where arguably more frustrated, disfranchised, and marginalized individuals and groups rebelled against powerful authorities.

Unfortunately, in what the literature describes as modern terrorism is not uncommon for individuals to act alone to cement their agenda through social media or as a result of extensive global media coverage. While one may not definitely pin point the genesis of terrorism, its unfortunate violence and atrocities have escalated as a result of technological advancement in general including the use of the military institution to achieve political or individual ambition.

The military, for example, does not have to directly or physically confront its so-called enemies any more. Rather, through the use of technology missiles, bombs, and chemical weapons can be dropped at a given geographical location killing and destroying everything within that area. Civilian casualties have become common in military



atrocities among nations under the guise of curbing terrorism. So what is terrorism? An attempt is made here to define or conceptualize these acts of barbarism.

Unfortunately, it has become a political tool of convenience where the well organized and the powerful nations utilized their military to suppress and threaten weaker societies or nations.

### **Defining Terrorism: Who's Definition Works?**

According to Cronin (2005: 341), "terrorism is notoriously difficult to define, in part because the term has evolved and... it is associated with an activity that is designed to be subjective." Many studies argue that an "objective and internationally accepted definition of terrorism can never be agreed upon...since one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter" (Ganor 2002).<sup>2</sup> The struggle in search for a suitable globally acceptable definition seems impossible "because different bodies, organizations, and government agencies have different definitions to suit their own particular (political) role, purpose, or bias" (Bruce 2013, 26). For example, the slave and colonial masters did not see themselves as engaging in acts of terrorism so are the nations that engaged in slavery and colonization for centuries. Affirming Bruce's submission, Carr (2007:47) argues there are no two agencies within the US government, for example, that have "identical" definition and in most cases cannot reconcile. Carr maintains this impasse exists in the academic community and among politicians where people, groups or societies they disagree with are referred to as terrorists.

That is, while no one seems to have any trouble recognizing terrorism, agreeing upon a satisfactory definition proves more elusive. It is a complicated phenomenon,

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<sup>2</sup> See also Laqueur Walter (1987). *The age of terrorism*. Little Brown and Company, Boston.

which requires a sophisticated strategy in achieving its goals. The League of Nations first attempted to define international terrorism in 1937, as a response to the assassination of the Yugoslavian head of state King Alexander I (the first) and “the President of the Council of the French Republic, Louis Bathou” (Bahan 2009, 344). Unfortunately, while the convention was adopted, it never came to fruition (Young 2006). Currently, there is a plethora of definitions of terrorism available in the literature, which tends to contradict each other.

### **The Struggle for an acceptable Definition**

The Oxford English Dictionary provides a number of possible definitions for terrorism, the most applicable for our purpose being: “a policy intended to strike with terror those against whom it is adopted” while a terrorist is defined as “anyone who attempts to further his views by a system of coercive intimidation” (Hoffman 2006:14). Gupta (2011) defines terrorism as a political act by non-state actors, where participants in contrast to common criminals, see their acts as a way of achieving public good, such as national independence, social justice, or “the establishment of a theocratic state, thus making them altruist in their own minds” (99). Those who find this definition limiting may find more satisfaction in Ganor’s (2002) definition of terrorism as “the deliberate use, or threat, of violence against civilians in order to attain, political, ideological, and religious aims” (288).

Those seeking a definition from sanctioned governmental agencies rather than academics might prefer the US Department of State’s definition of terrorism contained in Title 22 of the United States Code Section 2656f (d). It defines terrorism as “premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against other non-combatant

targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents.” The US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), on the other hand, defines terrorism as “the unlawful use of violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof in furtherance of political or social objectives” (Hoffman 2006, 38). The US Department of Defence (DoD) takes a slightly different stance defining it as “the unlawful use of –or threatened use of- force or violence against individuals or property to coerce or intimidate governments or societies, often to achieve political, religious, or ideological objectives”(38).

The United Nations (UN) has long struggled to settle on a definition of terrorism for global acceptance since its working definitions tend to accuse powerful nations the very crime they claim to be fighting against. For years the UN avoided using the term terrorism, even when specifically crafting policy to combat it, in order to avoid any political and ideological disputes surrounding the term; terrorism (Saul 2005). In fact, the first time the UN actually used the term terrorism was in 1985 in the Security Council Resolutions 579, crafted in response to “the excessive amount of global terror attacks” (44). Additionally, the first time a direct link was actually made between terrorism and violations of human rights dates back to the 1993 Vienna World Conference on Human Rights (Symonides 2001). The UN avoided making any declarative statement regarding a definition of terrorism until October 2004 when it adopted the Security Council Resolution 1566, which generally, but not expressively, defines terrorism as:

...criminal acts, including against civilians, committed with the intent to cause death or serious bodily injury, or taking of hostages with the purpose to provoke a state of terror in the general public or in a group of person or particular person, intimidate a population or compel a government or an international organization to or to abstain from doing any act which constitute offences within the scope and

as defined in the international conventions and protocols relating to terrorism (Saul 2005:164).

At the International Convention for the suppression financing terrorism, the UN once again made an indirect attempt to define terrorism as:

Any other act intended to cause death or serious bodily injury to a civilian, or to any other person not taking an active part in the hostilities in situation or armed conflict, when the purpose of such act, by its nature or contest is to intimidate a population or compel a government or an international organization to do or abstain from doing an act (Bahan 2009, 346).

However, it could be argued that the UN's best effort to define terrorism occurred at the Draft Comprehensive Convention on Terrorism, which sought to label terrorism a criminal offense if certain qualifications are met, describing a terrorist as:

Any person who commit an offence within the meaning of the present Convention if that person by any means unlawfully and unintentionally causes (a) Death or the serious bodily injury to any person; or (b) Serious damage to public or private property, including a place of public use, a State or government facility, a public transportation system, and infrastructure facility or to the environment; or (c) Damage to property, places, facilities, or systems referred to in paragraph 1 (b) of the present article resulting or likely to result in major economic loss; when the purpose to conduct, by its nature or contest, is to intimidate a population, or to complete a Government or international organization to do or abstain from doing an act (361).

Of the definitions provided, it is those that specifically mention targeting civilian populations, which are most applicable to the argument concerning the differentiation between terrorists and freedom fighters. Here again, who decides what definition must be used? Will the nations that engaged in centuries of slavery and colonization, which were direct target on civilians, admit that they supported, financed, and legalised terrorism? Every known war involves the killings of civilians but there is an attempt to differentiate these military criminal activities involved in killing or slaughtering of civilians as non-terrorist activity.

## Terrorists or Freedom Fighters

The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) Chairman, Yasser Arafat, including Nelson Mandela of South Africa, Mumar Al Gardafi of Libya, was more often than not labelled as a terrorist but he quibble rejected that label associated to him by Israel and the West claiming that “the difference between the revolutionary and the terrorist lies in the reason for which each fights” (Hoffman 2006, 26). In fact, many groups that commit acts of terror eschew the pejorative terrorism label and prefer to think of themselves instead as freedom fighters. Nelson Mandela wanted equality for all in South Africans by rejecting the evils of apartheid in that country while Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and others wanted total liberation for Africans who were buried in the oppressive rule of European colonial governments.

These views strike many as a massive rationalization. Those who supported the contention of Arafat and his ilk could argue that they were merely freedom fighters hence the distinction. The same argument could be made for, or against, some African leaders such as Robert Mugabe, Nelson Mandela, Jomo Kenyatta, Kwame Nkrumah, and others who led groups such as the *Mau Mau* to fight the evils of European colonization and occupation for independence and freedom. Ganor (2002) writes:

What is important in these definitions is the differentiation between the goals and the means used to achieve these goals. The aims of terrorism and guerrilla warfare may well be identical; but they are distinguished from each other by the means used- or more precisely, by the targets of their operations. The guerrilla fighter’s targets are military ones, while the terrorist deliberately targets civilians. By this definition, a terrorist can no longer claim to be a “freedom fighter” because they are fighting for national liberation or some other worthy goal (288).

The systematic and continuous targeting of civilians is and should be the principle qualifier in any definition of terrorism. The distinguishing between goals and the means

by which the goals are achieved is a distinction that cannot be overstated. Terrorism is a tactic used to accomplish an objective, be it political, ideological, or economical, but it is the indiscriminate targeting of civilians, which separated the modern day terrorism from the Jacobin revolutionary. Despite the distinctions academicians struggle to show, the resultant effect is that they are all killing human beings.

So would countries like France, Portugal, the UK, German, and the US that enslaved or colonized other countries (mainly, non combat civilians) be seen as nations that engaged in terrorism for economic gains? Martin (2006) attempts to answer this question by identifying types of terrorism but provides some compelling definitions. His types of terrorism include: State, dissident, religious, and criminal (49-50). In his criminal definition of terrorism Martin maintains “terrorism motivated by sheer profit, or some amalgam of profit and politics” (49) is criminal hence slavery and colonization as the colonizers and slave masters including those states such as the US, UK, Portugal, France and other European countries profited from their criminal terrorist activities. In fact, as Fausto (1999) has argued, the slaves were used as tools of production to profit only the slave masters and a slave could be sold as a commodity at any time for profit and economic reasons.

The problem of the definition conundrum is that the terrorism literature is skewed as a result of dependence on data provided by governments and their agencies. So if a government decides, which criminal activities constitute or fit terrorism then the said government would label it so. It is not uncommon for powerful nations dropping bombs on civilians in the name of preventing the spread of communism or fighting terrorism but those nations do not consider their actions as acts of terrorism. As Schmid and Jongman

(2006) lamented, “The perception of political terrorism as a practical problem requiring urgent solution has led to poorly defined, ideologically biased, conceptually skewed research.” That is, “policy-oriented research tends to impede sound theoretical work because of urgent social need (real or perceived) to achieve concrete results in the real world” (180). So do we see the military as root of terrorism? Or does the military engage in terrorism? When a soldier kills must it be considered a murder or what? Societies have moved away from moral righteousness to reward institutional murders in the name of defence and protection. Over two thousand years ago, a Chinese philosopher, Mo Ti,<sup>3</sup> argued everyone [“knows that murder is unrighteous” yet “when murder is committed in attacking a country it is not considered wrong; it is applauded and called righteous.” [Thank you for your service has become a common phrase (greeting) societies use to acknowledge the atrocities of the military in the name of defence, freedom, and peace. To the Mo Ti such an action made no sense, he maintains “if a man calls black black if it seen on a small scale, but calls black white when it is seen on a large scale, then he is the one who cannot tell black from white.] Goldstein (2004, 71).

### **Military Origins**

The organizing principle of the military for any society is for war in the name of defence and territorial protection. The study of military doctrine has become an academic discipline where the study is restricted in its written form. The question is “whether there existed written doctrines before the Renaissance is a matter of interpretation” (Hoiback 2013, 25). Some archaeological evidence suggests that elements of warfare began appearing as early as 10,000 years ago, as frontier tensions began to

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<sup>3</sup> See also Tzu, Sun Tzu. The art of war. Translated by Samuel B. Griffith. NY. Oxford, 1963, p. 22.

develop between rapidly evolving agricultural societies<sup>4</sup> (Cioffi-Revilla 1996). Not long after the establishment of the earliest known cities in Lake Uruk Mesopotamia in 3500 BC, written evidence of battle, “metal weapons and helmets began appearing as Mesopotamia and Elam started to engage in conflicts” (3100 BC)<sup>5</sup> (Oates 1993, 403). However, according to Cioffi-Revilla, the first reliably recorded wars occurred circa 2700 B.C. In fact, one of the oldest military documents ever found called the *Royal Standard* dated to roughly the same time period contains details of the Sumerian army.<sup>6</sup> The first evidence of an *organized* army may be traced back to 2450 B.C., as the Stele of Vultures depicts King Eanatum of Lagash leading an obvious contingent of troops.<sup>7</sup> Later the first evidence of a specialized fighting force came in the middle of eighteen century BC, as the development and use of the chariot demanded a level of specialization not required previously in the course of battle.<sup>8</sup> Yet perhaps the biblical Joshua, who is often credited with in the advent of psychological warfare and intelligence gathering during his siege of Jericho, made the greatest contribution to modern warfare.<sup>9</sup> The Iron Age saw yet another advancement of warfare, as the invention of iron allowed for a larger, more diversified fighting force, allowing armies to grow from just a few thousand members to Egypt’s fighting force numbering 100,000 men.<sup>10</sup>

The Middle East region is often referred to as the “Cradle of Civilization

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ancient-art-civilizations/ancient-near->

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<sup>4</sup> Meistrich, I. (2005). Military history: The birthplace of war. In *Historynet*. Retrieved January 25, 2018, from <http://www.historynet.com/military-history-the-birthplace-of-war.html> (Originally published in *MHQ: The Quarterly Journal of Military History*: Spring 2005)

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

<sup>10</sup> Ibid



[east1/the-ancient-near-east-an-introduction/a/the-cradle-of-civilization](#)). Not only is the region the location of the first recorded evidence of militarism, but also it is the birthplace of many of the concepts of armed conflict. Initially, conflicts spawned from disputes over resources; however, as the birthplace of three of the world's most influential religions; Islam, Christianity, and Judaism, natural conflicts among believers were inevitable. Therefore, in addition to be credited as the "Cradle of Warfare" the region may also lay claim to being the cradle of genocide, political/religious misunderstanding, terrorism, and jihad.<sup>11</sup> The organization of armies was to fight and protect a given group's (this could be society, tribe, state, or nation) territory. The core function of the military-kill and destroy- since its inception has not change but rather other activities in terms of protection have been added. From the Iron Age till now, the military as an institution has become a very lethal fighting force as a result of advancement in technology, which includes the use of aircrafts, submarines, missiles, nuclear weapons, and precision bombs. So what is the exact role of the military? To defend, protect, or destroy?

### **The Role of the Military in Nations**

Little has changed regarding the function of the military since the advent of civilization. Its purpose is still to defend and protect the interest of the people, society, state, and nation that it serves. However, the role of military in society has become somewhat more complex and refined. In many nations, democratic governments, the military is now subject to civilian control, meaning civilians outside of the military and defence establishments are the sole legitimate source for the direction and actions of the military. In almost all democratic nations, the commander in chief is the leader of the

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid

country, who is more likely to be a civilian who may have no military background or understand its doctrine. This is not to imply that active military leaders do not have a role in decisions regarding the use of force, “their professional competence provides them enormous amount of influence on such decisions” (Bland 1999, 11). Nevertheless, in a democratic country, such as the US, the UK, Ghana, France, and Nigeria, the military does not lead a nation-it serves.<sup>12</sup> However, under authoritarian or military government, the face of the governments is the military, for example, Cuba since its revolution under Fidel Castro, Ghana from 1966-1992 under various military leaders including Flt. Lt. Jerry John Rawlings, General Ignatius Kutu Acheampong, and many other countries including Brazil and Venezuela that experienced military dictatorship one time or the other. But more and more countries adopting democratic principles and governance are adopting the civilian leader-commander in-chief approach where the military despite its power takes instructions from the commander-in chief who consults with the military generals. The US State Department defines civil-military relations through six key principals:

1. Civilians need to direct their nation’s military and decide issues of national defense, not because they are necessarily wiser than the military professions, but precisely because they are the people’s representatives and as such are charged with the responsibility for making these decisions and remaining accountable for them.
2. The military in a democracy exists to protect the nation and the freedom of its people. It does not represent or support any political viewpoint or ethnic and social group. Its loyalty is to the larger ideals of the nation, to the rule of law, and to the principle of democracy itself.
3. Civilian control assures that a country’s values, institutions, and policies are the free choices of the people rather than the military. The purpose of the military is to defend society not define it.

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<sup>12</sup> Principles of democracy: Civil-Military relations (2005). In *InfoUSA*. Retrieved February 2018, from <http://infousa.state.gov/government/overview/civil.html> (InfoUSA is maintained by the Bureau of International Information Programs of the U.S. State Department).

4. Any democratic government values the expertise and advice of military professionals in reaching policy decisions about defense and national security. Civilian officials rely upon the military for expert advice on these matters and to carry out the decision of the government. But only the elected civilian leadership should make the ultimate decisions-which the military then implements in its sphere.
5. Military figures may, of course, participate fully and equally in the political life of their country just like any other citizen- but only as individual voters. Military people must first retire from military service before becoming involved in politics; armed services must remain separate from politics. The military are the neutral servants of the state, and the guardians of society.
6. Ultimately, civil control of the military ensures that defense and national security issues do not compromise the basic democratic values or majority rule, minority rights, and freedom of speech, religion, and due process. It is the responsibility of all political leaders to enforce civilian control and the responsibility of the military to obey the lawful orders of civilian authority.<sup>13</sup>

This has not always been the basis for civil-military relations, for quite some time it was the prevalent conviction that politics should not interfere with the army- rather than the army should not interfere with politics (Bland 1999, 12-15). The evolution of thought in connection to civil military relations is responsible for a variety of different views on the military's role in society. Even now, countries all over the world hold diverse views of the role of the military in their nation, in addition to differing ideas of what the military should look like. Despite the diverging view of this institution, the budget of the military keeps soaring while other sectors like education, infrastructure, and health may be on the decline especially in developing countries. For example, Table 1 shows how much regions spend on the military from 2005-2012.

**Table 1. Military Expenditure by Regions: 2005-2012\***

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>
<b><u>World Total</u></b>	<b>1423</b>	<b>1528</b>	<b>1609</b>	<b>1715</b>	<b>1744</b>	<b>1749</b>	<b>1742</b>	<b>1756</b>
<u>Africa</u>	24.2	25.9	26.7	30.4	31.8	33.8	37.8	39.2
<u>North Africa</u>	7.9	7.9	8.5	10.1	11.1	12	15.1	16.4
<u>Sub-Saharan Africa</u>	16.3	18	18.1	20.4	20.7	21.8	22.8	22.7

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid

<u>Americas</u>	651	665	685	737	793	817	808	782
<u>Central America and the Caribbean</u>	5.1	5.6	6.2	6.3	7.1	7.7	8	8.5
<u>North America</u>	598	607	625	671	724	743	735	708
<u>South America</u>	48.7	52	54.6	59.5	62.2	66.3	65.2	65.9
<u>Asia and Oceania</u>	260	275	296	313	349	356	369	390
<u>Central and South Asia</u>	46	46.6	47.9	52.8	60.6	61.7	62.9	59.8
<u>East Asia</u>	167	180	194	204	229	235	247	268
<u>Oceania</u>	24.3	24.9	28.3	28.9	30.3	30	31.3	33.7
<u>South East Asia</u>	24.3	24.9	28.3	28.9	30.3	30	31.3	33.7
<u>Europe</u>	387	397	408	419	428	419	411	407
<u>Eastern Europe</u>	55.5	63	70	76.6	78.9	80.2	87	100
<u>Western and Central Europe</u>	331	334	338	343	349	338	324	307
<u>Middle East</u>	100	107	113	110	112	118	123	134

**\*Source:** *SIPRI, Yearbook 2013: Armaments, disarmament and international security.* Oxford University Press. Pp. 128-129. All figures are in US\$ b. at constant (2011) exchange rates.

According to a study by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), countries are more likely to increase their military spending in the name of security and defence. What is interesting is that all regions did increase their military spending and such a trend is more likely to be sustained in the foreseeable future under the disguise of fighting terrorism. Table 2 shows the amount of money various countries are investing in the military. It should be noted that on the average from 2003 to 2012

**Table 2. Military Spending for some selected Countries from 2003-2012\***

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
<i>Ghana*</i>	81	79	79	85	130	114	127	129	99	119
<i>Iraq</i>	N/A	1882	2541	1824	2724	3401	3225	3782	5905	5693
<i>Israel*</i>	17279	16514	15898	16940	16447	15796	15933	15398	15163	15536
<i>Mexico*</i>	3941	3797	4081	4440	5013	5019	5689	6203	6472	7103
<i>Nigeria</i>	1190	1159	1034	1067	1239	1741	1825	2143	2386	2100
<i>Russia</i>	42658	44379	50505	56417	61824	67986	71566	72918	78330	90646
<i>Saudi Arabia</i>	25751	28628	34495	39294	45264	44425	45655	48511	48531	54218

<i>Syria</i>	2322	2326	2339	2104	2236	2027	2301	2366	2495	N/A
<i>United States</i>	507781	553441	579831	588837	604292	649010	701087	720386	711402	671628

**Source:** SIPRI, *Yearbook 2013: Armaments, disarmament and international security*. Oxford University Press. Pp. 174-180. (Figures are in the local currencies of the various countries).

most countries did increase their military spending regardless of the financial status of each country.

Prior to 9/11 it was the general consensus that the realities of a post- Cold War world would necessarily dictate that traditional military powers like the UK revamp its military operations by focusing on smaller, busier, more flexible force, whose budget reflects a smaller percentage of the state’s gross national product (Dandeker 1994, 645-647).

However, those goals were predicted on the supposition that the end of the Cold War signalled a decrease in international hostilities. This has not to be the case; the attacks on 9/11 and rising tensions in the Middle East altered the perceptions of many concerning the de-emphasis of military power. Yet, as more nations make the move toward democracy and individual liberty, especially in third world countries, it may very well be possible that a decline in international hostilities could eventually spell a softening of hard-core military posturing and that civil-military relations across the globe might grow. In fact, with global political uncertainty and tensions, most countries are rather investing (financially- purchasing new military equipment), especially powerful nations, in building up their military. Countries have used their military institutions to extend their political agenda or quest for regional or global power, for example, in 2017 the US and North Korea (President Donald Trump and President Kim Jong-un respectively) did engaged in orotundity regarding whose nuclear weapon is the most lethal. Unfortunately, some individuals have charismatically utilized the military institution through *coup d’état*

to ascend power either terrorise their citizens or neighbors. For example, J.J. Rawlings of Ghana in 1981, Idi Amin of Uganda in 1971, Napoleon Bonaparte of France in 1799, Francisco Franco of Spain in 1936, Muammar al-Qaddafi in 1969, and Augusto Pinochet of Chile in 1973. Such individualist ambitions occur mostly in developing countries where citizens of those nations are terrorised by their leaders through the use of the military institution. But terrorism, as understood depending on who is defining it, has placed the military into a very controversial position on global and national self-defence.

### **The Military and Terrorism**

Does the military as an institution engage in terrorism? Again, it goes back to the definer. To most Palestinians, if not all, they are constantly terrorised by the Israeli army while a counter argument would be that the Israelis are trying to confront Palestinian terrorists who are constantly sending rockets into Israeli settlements hence the army is defending and protecting Israelis from terrorism (Ageel 2016). The next question is would the invasion by a powerful nation be considered terrorism since the natives have to live under the atrocities of an occupied foreign army. For example, how does one categorise these invasions and occupations of France, UK, Germany, Portugal in colonized African and South American countries? The US army in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Porto Rico, the UK in Afghanistan or the USSR in Afghanistan or Russia in Ukraine?

The military and by extension, the argument that nations engage in terrorism is debatable and one must make a distinction between state and state-sponsored terrorism (De Nevers 2007). Whether or not states through their military engage in terrorism depends on which lens one uses; undeniably everyone views terrorism within their own political context. For example, one is more likely to interpret current events in terrorism

as if those events have no historical precedent. The military and terrorism as already established “is by no means a modern phenomenon, and in fact, it has a long history. Nor does terrorism arise from a political vacuum” (Martin 2006, 5). There are political, religious, cultural, and economic climate, in many parts of the world, “which foster the conditions for terrorism to thrive” (Piazza 2007, 521).

According to Piazza many so-called failed states are willing to tolerate large-scale terroristic operations within their borders in exchange for material compensation, political support, or terrorist services during times of political uproar. States that embrace terrorism as a tool of foreign policy, using those services and surrogates as means of waging war covertly, can be described as state-sponsors of terror (Hoffman 2006). The reality is that every country, especially the powerful nations (eg: Israel, US, UK, Russia, and France), use their military might not only to threaten weaker ones to abide by their policy agenda but also when those weaker nations fail to comply to the demands of the powerful the latter is punished by the former. For example, when Saddam Hussein of Iraq was falsely accused of harboring weapons of mass destruction by the US under George W. Bush administration, Iraq was invaded in 2003 by the so-called coalition of the willing where the Iraq president was eventually killed. Similar examples can be cited in Libya, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Afghanistan, Egypt, and Syria where powerful nations, especially the West and Russia, exercise their unwelcome military might.

The 1979 Iranian hostage crisis, in which 52 Americans from the US Embassy were held prisoners in Tehran, is the single most pivotal event in the emergence of state-sponsored terrorism as a weapon of state and instrument of foreign policy. Since the surrogates who claimed public responsibility for the attacks were Iranian militant

students, the government had no official involvement in the episode, precluding the acts from being labelled as state terror (Hoffman 2006:186-190).

As Hoffman noted, the use of surrogates by states offers a certain amount of flexibility and a variety of advantages. Many terrorist groups are desirous of the media attention they attract with such heinous acts. He argues states that sponsor terror are typically, more concerned with bringing to bear pressure on their enemies, and are less burdened by the need to attract attention to their cause. Another advantage for the state that sponsors terrorists as opposed to ordinary terrorists, who act alone, is that those states “have the benefit of not being concerned with the reactions of the local population” (193). The problem is no state agrees it sponsors terrorists. There is no evidence in the terrorism literature where the US, UK, Iran, Russia, Germany, France, Portugal, China, South Africa, Israel, Ghana, Israel or Palestine has officially claimed to supporting or sponsoring terrorists. Rather it is nations that label groups and other states as sponsors of terrorism, something all nations are guilty of. For example, all these groups, the CIA (US), KGB (USSR), MI6 (UK), and other security services of all nations by way of intelligence collection to protect their various countries clandestinely through their nocturnal activities commit the same crimes as terrorists (Valentine 2017; Perkins 2006).

If these national security agencies are officially or unofficially involved in clandestine terrorists activities why then do some selected nations claim to be fighting terrorism when they are guilty of terrorism. As noted earlier by their very definitions states cannot be accused of terrorism when they are fighting a war. Ganor (2002: 289) defines the issue this way:

The term terrorism is superfluous when describing the actions of sovereign state-not because states are on a higher moral level, but because according to



international conventions, any deliberate attack upon civilians in wartime by regular military forces is already defined as a war crime.

According to Gage (2011:78) the term “terrorism” should be reserved for those acts, which are committed by non-state actors. So Gage wants us to believe that states and the military do not terrorise their enemies. Terrorism takes the lives of other human beings whether is an individual, gangs, groups, societies, the military or nations, the acts of terrorism need condemnation. Unfortunately, countries reward the military when it drops bombs on civilians in other nations, those considered enemies. The atrocities committed against civilians in WW II were the primary impetus for the negotiation of the Geneva Conventions and the creation of International Humanitarian Law (Bianchi 2011). But when nations go to war the military does not only kill their fellow human beings (so-called enemies or bad guys) in uniform instead they kill civilians also and destroy their properties. The so-called principle of distinction provided for in Convention IV relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, declare that civilians cannot be attacked and are protected in any number of ways, including from “collective punishment, reprisals, and acts of *terrorism*” (Ivan 2011:110). Additionally, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda statute lists terrorism as a possible war crime in Non-International Armed Conflicts (NIAC) (Bianchi, 2). Also, the Trials Chamber (2003) and Appeals Chamber (2006) of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia held that terror is covered by Article 3 of its statutes concerning the violation of the laws and customs of war. According to Greenwood (2002: 313), every state is entitled to the use of force in certain circumstances, but hostilities must be conducted in such a way that complies with international humanitarian law, this is often referred to as the “law of armed conflict” or the “law of war.” Both the UK’s *Joint Service Manuel of*

*the Law of Armed Conflict* (2004) and the US's *Law of War Desk Book* (2011)

acknowledge that any exemption to the prohibition of use of force must be justified by the existence of a viable legal basis in international law (Bovarnick et al., 2011). Armed conflict is described as:

- a. Any difference between states and leading to the intervention of members of the armed forces in an armed conflict.
- b. An armed conflict exists whenever there is a resort to armed forces between states or a protracted armed violence between governmental authorities and the organized armed groups within a state (GBMOD 2004, 29).

In the United States' *Law of War Deskbook*, the legal basis for the use of force is outlined clearly and deliberately. The use of force in certain situations must abide by a specific set of criteria- primary among them is the use of force be necessary proportional and that the use of force be viewed as a last resort (Bovarnick et al. 2001, 37-38).

Additionally, both the UK and US laws clearly prohibit intentional attacks against non-combatants (GBMOD 2004; Bovarnick et al, 2001: 143-144). Moreover, while the US law of war does not mention terrorism specifically within the chapter entitled "War Crimes and Command Responsibilities", it does explicitly state that every violation of the law of war is a crime, including breaches of the aforementioned Common Article 3 of the NIAC's, it expressly "prohibits crimes against humanity, which include widespread or systematic attacks on civilian populations" (Bovarnick et al, 2001:187). The UK, on the other hand, does expressly prohibit terrorism, according to the GBMOD:

Acts or threats of violence, the primary purpose of which is to spread terror among the civilian population are prohibited. This rule reinforced the rule that civilians are not to be made the object of direct attack (2004: 67).

It is the position of these states that it is a war crime for members of their military to engage in acts of terrorism, this coupled with the other statutes of international law seem to lead credence to the notion that it is indeed possible for the military, and by extension a

state, to engage in terrorism. This runs counter to the position of Ganor (2002) and many other scholars who deem it impossible to define such acts (military atrocities) by states as terrorism because any deliberate attack upon civilians in wartime by regular military forces is already defined as a war crime. In fact, war is a crime since nations and their military institutions go to war to kill and destroy.

### **Conclusion**

The greatest enemy of the human race is the human race itself as it continues to divide humanity into compartments of race, religion, geographical location, and other superficial categorization. Terrorism has always been a complicated issue and almost impossible to define given its relativity. Since the first cases of documented terrorism committed by the Sicarii in 70AD to the attacks on the US on 9/11 and there after, the definition of terrorism has fluctuated with the times, while the violence (killing people and destruction) remain constant. It is our individualistic or societal perceptions of terror that have proven the most difficult challenge to producing a universally accepted definition of terrorism. Bahan (2009) argues, “in order for international terrorism to be universally defined, the international community must be sensitive to the diverging specific normative values of different states” and actors (362-363). However, if we may, as Ganor (2002) suggests, create an objective definition that is based on accepted international law and principles concerning behaviors that are permitted among nations in conventional wars, and then further distinguish the non-state actors that deliberately use violence or the threat of violence to attain political, religious, and ideological objectives, then we may differentiate between “the means used to achieve these goals” (288). This

clearly delineates terrorism as a tactic separate from the values or justifications of any state or individuals within states, choosing to use such tactics.

The military as an institution originated to defend and protect the societies it serves. Unfortunately, with technological advancement in weaponry, the military has become a lethal institution of destruction. Now the question is should the atrocities of the military be considered acts of terrorism? The historical function of the military has not changed but the ability to kill and destroy has improved astronomically as result of technology and other weapons such as chemical, nuclear, and biological. Regardless of how terrorism is defined, we are destroying ourselves as no amount of military power can eliminate terrorism, if it would ever be defined globally. Different constituencies have divergently interpretation of the role of the military. As long as nations use this institution to either silent or threaten those they political, culturally, or ideologically disagree with, the selective justification and reward for military atrocities will forever fuel terrorism.

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