Has globalisation made the world more dangerous?

Currently the world grapples with the worst economic downturn in decades, a growing body of research suggests the complexity of the modern global economy may make us more vulnerable than ever to catastrophe. Globalisation has impacted societies around the world in both positive and negative ways. Despite positive changes in certain areas though, there are two significant factors that make the globalised (and globalising) world a more dangerous place with respect to the rise of non-State threats. The spread of information and technology greatly increases the risks associated with any given terrorist attack; and economic transformations related to globalisation have left large portions of society disenfranchised while increasing the polarisation of wealth. Furthermore, the globalisation of culture, economics and religion has been a main reason for the increase in non-state threats and violence carried out by insurgents. Since the emergence and expansion of globalisation in the 1990s, the world has experienced increased problems. The proposed problems are; increased terrorist activity, gaps between religion and cultural ideologies widening, global financial systems being less stable, dangers of pandemic diseases increasing, and global climate change becoming a major danger. One has to explore the extent to which globalisation has created a situation in which non-State threats can thrive and affect a wider number of people, thus making the world a more dangerous place. Globalisation can be defined as the " integration of economic, social and cultural relations across borders" (CLARK, 1997), and " Globalization is best understood as the creation of a variety of transboundary mechanisms for interaction that affect and reflect the acceleration of economic, political and security interdependence." (KAY, 2004: 10) The term ' non-State threats' refers to groups and individuals such

as ethnic militias, cults, organised crime and terrorism. (CHA, 2000) Although ' terrorism' has no widely accepted definition it " has come to mean the use of violence by small groups to achieve political change." (BAYLIS, SMITH, OWENS, 2008: 372) The relationship between non-State threats and globalisation is difficult to describe accurately, but it is inaccurate to suggest that globalisation is responsible for their rise, but technologies associated with globalisation have been exploited. Furthermore the economic transformations that have occurred due to globalisation have made it easier for terrorists to operate globally, communicate between one another and manoeuvre arms, and the breaking down of national territorial and trading boundaries also means that threat can travel further distances. The question asserts that there has been a ' rise' in non-state threats. Indeed, the post cold war era has seen a rise of ' non-State' forms of insurgency and violence, most notably in Mexico, Palestine, Bosnia, Somalia and Rwanda. Global Conflicts seem to be changing from wars between states to wars within them. Of the 89 conflicts between 1989 and 1992 only 3 were between states. These conflicts were seen to be non-State, post-ideological, and more devastating in terms of their human effects. Indeed the world has become a more dangerous place in the last twenty years. However, in order to make a judgement on whether globalisation has been the main cause, one has to assess the extent to which globalisation has helped increase the level of threat posed by non-state insurgency and the potential harm this can cause to the global population.

Firstly, globalisation has made the world a more dangerous place as " the technological advances associated with globalization have improved the

capabilities of terrorist groups to plan and conduct operations with far more devastation and coordination." (BAYLIS, SMITH, OWENS, 2008: 378) The spread of technology, due to globalisation, has huge implications when considering the risk of any given terrorist attack. Globalisation has resulted in more trade, more connectivity, more markets, and more openness, and has therefore greatly enhanced the likelihood of any of a number of weapons of mass destruction, biological, chemical or nuclear, becoming accessible to terrorist groups. Today the potential harm that one terrorist attack can cause is staggering. Weaponry is more widely available in the modern day because they are far more easily bought, sold and transported. Advances in technology have contributed to " The mobility of ideas, capital, technology, and people" (WEBBER, BARMA, KROENIG, RATNER, 2007: 50). Therefore non-Sate threats of the present day have a far greater capacity to cause harm globally due the advancement of world communications, transport and other technology. Today's international terrorism owes much to globalisation. Al Qaeda uses the internet to transmit messages, it uses credit cards and modern banking to move money and it uses cell phones and laptops to plot attacks. Globalisation has also empowered terrorist groups as it has allowed an un-censored increase in the volume, range and sophistication of propaganda materials. (BAYLIS, SMITH, OWENS, 2008) An example of this can be seen from 1997 when a website posted the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movements' communiqués and videos during the seizure of the Japanese embassy in Lima. Furthermore, the terrorist organisation, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, has a website that promotes the group as internationally accepted and that they are committed to conflict resolution. Any computer can be used for propaganda purposes, such as with the

printing of leaflets, and globalisation has allowed its influence to reach the furthest corners of the Earth. This has made the world more dangerous as the harmful ideals and objectives of terrorists can be spread with ease, and are more accessible to the general public, through the internet, video and various other methods.

The technological advancement brought on by globalisation has also meant non-state threats like terrorists can mount co-ordinated attacks, from various areas, in different countries. (BAYLIS, SMITH, OWENS, 2008) The London Underground bombings in July 2005, the Madrid bombings in March 2004 are but two examples. Extremist, fundamentalist groups, terrorists, criminals, and drug smugglers have been enhanced by the globalisation of technology and information. (CHA, 2000) Technologies including hand held phones and radios have allowed insurgents to operate independently and at substantial distances from one another. For example the Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM) standard ensures that any compliant phone will work anywhere in the world where a GSM network has been established. Therefore insurgents can conduct attacks in locations that are geographically separated by large distances. The improvement in global communications brought on by globalisation has certainly aided militant Islamic non-State threats as they appear presently to have global depth, power, and reach. For example, " the 9/11 hijackers utilized cheap and readily available pre-paid phone cards to communicate between cell leaders and senior leadership and, according to at least one press account, coordinated final attack authorization prior to the jets taking off from different locations." (BAYLIS, SMITH, OWENS, 2008: 380) Moreover, to a certain extent, terrorism has

become much harder to counter due to globalisation because groups such as the Islamic fundamentalists have developed into a virtual global community rather than a hierarchical organisation with fixed training camps and headquarters. Various measures have been put in place for privacy on the internet such as passwords and the development of 64 and 128 bit encryption software which is tough to crack. Threatening Non-State groups are fairly well protected in their virtual community. Therefore, not only have technological advancements, spread throughout the world by the process of globalisation, allowed terrorists to co-ordinate with more efficiency, but they have provided more security for non-State threatening actors as well. " Terrorist groups have been able to leverage technological developments designed to shield a user's identity from unauthorized commercial or private exploitation" (GUNARATNA, 2002: 35).

Globalisation has also helped Non-State threats of the present day have incredible mobility and what is more frightening is their potential lethality as well. Globalisation has made the crossing of international boundaries far easier. In recent years terrorists have been able to move rapidly between borders, making efforts to track them very complicated. Global commerce has been expanded hugely and this has helped increase the mobility of non-State threats. " The volume of air travel and goods that pass through ports has increased exponentially through globalization" (BAYLIS, SMITH, OWENS, 2008). The expanding global system of markets has meant border security measures have been relaxed in many areas. Moreover, demands for the efficient supply, manufacture and delivery of goods has made life more difficult for Sates to prevent terrorists exploiting gaps in security measures,

which were originally created to deter illegal activity. An increase in mobility has also made it easier for threatening non-State groups to transfer expertise between one another, and it has become easier for terrorist groups to establish operational bonds with their counterparts and sponsors across the world. Such collaboration flourished in the 1990s, and members of the international terrorism community are believed to have trained in many countries such as Afghanistan; Bosnia-Herzegovina; Chile; Colombia; Iran; Iraq; Libya; Mexico; North Korea; Pakistan; Sudan; Syria; and Turkey. Moreover globalisation has increased the potential lethality of non-State threats. " Globalization may allow some terrorist groups to acquire, manufacture, and use weapons of mass destruction in order to conduct catastrophic attacks." (BAYLIS, SMITH, OWENS, 2008: 382) Since the end of the cold war we have been given reason believe that attacks in the future by threatening non-State groups may involve weapons of mass destruction. For example, evidence recovered in Afghanistan in 2001 outlined plans by Al Qaeda to produce and test biological and chemical weapons. Globalisation has facilitated access to weapons as opportunities to transport weaponry internationally have grown substantially with the opening of markets and increased trade associated with a globalising world. It has greatly enhanced the likelihood of threatening non-State actors gaining possession of weapons of mass destruction, and therefore there has been a substantial increase in the harmful potential that modern day terrorist attack entails.

The breaking down of national trade barriers and the move towards a global free market by globalisation has certainly aided non-State threats. Globalisation is coupled with an ideology of free markets and free trade and

a decline in state intervention. (SHELLEY, 2006) The opening of markets has its global benefits but it can also aid terrorists as it has increased their capability to organise and strike globally. The 9/11 attacks are the best example as it was the heart of the US that got struck, which is a fair distance from the Al Qaeda heartland in the Middle East. Globalisation has made the transfer of money across borders literally instantaneous, and opportunities to transport weapons internationally have grown substantially with the opening of markets and increased trade associated with a globalising world. (LI, QUAN, SCHAUB, 2006) The acceleration of trade between states, has resulted in the establishment of Multi-National Corporations (MNCs), and has thus instituted transnational organisations that operate by their own rules and regulations rather than that of the governments. The creation of transnational organisations has facilitated trade with less government intervention and this has supported the boom of illicit trade as there are fewer regulations from the government to check the system. Furthermore, the rise in illegal trade of drugs and arms has made it easier for terrorists to fund their organisations and broaden it. As a result of this illicit trade, today terrorism has, in a sense, become a transnational organisation that cannot be easily checked and corrected by the government. Thus terrorists pose more threat to a greater number of people due to globalisation. The current wave of international terrorism, characterised by unpredictable and unprecedented threats from non-state actors, not only is a reaction to globalisation but is facilitated by it. (CRONIN, 2002) A relevant example for this would be resurgence of Al Qaeda and regrouping of Taliban, both labelled as terrorist organizations, funded with cash from heroin trade. (SHANTY, 2008)

Globalisation has also made the world more dangerous by creating a system in which international crime, a form of non-State threat, can prosper. Transnational criminals are major beneficiaries of globalisation. Terrorists and criminals move people, money, and commodities through a world where the increasing flows of people, money, and commodities provide excellent cover for their activities. Both terrorists and transnational crime groups have globalised to reach their markets, to perpetuate their acts, and to evade detection (SHELLEY, 2006), thus making the world essentially more dangerous. Globalisation advocates the reduction of international regulations and barriers to trade and investment in order to increase trade and development. However, it is these conditions of a globalised environment that are crucial to the expansion of crime, as the decline in regulations have been exploited and has provided criminals with greater freedom. Transnational crime groups have been able to extend their reach by exploiting loopholes of state based legal systems. " They travel to regions where they cannot be extradited, base their operations in countries with ineffective or corrupt law enforcement, and launder their money in countries with bank secrecy or few effective controls. By segmenting their operations, both criminals and terrorists reap the benefits of globalization, while simultaneously reducing their operational risks." (SHELLEY, 2006: WEB) Furthermore, globalisation has resulted in global trade increasing enormously, meaning there has been a larger flow of legitimate commodities but also an increase in illicit merchandise. Essentially the world has become more dangerous as globalisation has facilitated the movement of drugs, arms and contraband; which can in turn be used to generate profit for illegal non-State organisations. The drug trade was the first illicit sector to

maximise profits in a globalised world. However, as the market for drugs became more competitive and law enforcement responses increased, the risk became greater meaning criminals have subsequently sought to benefit financially from other operations like arms trafficking and trade in people. " A major service industry has also developed to serve all forms of transnational criminals" (SHELLEY, 2006: WEB). For example, providers of false documentation and money launderers such as Riggs Bank in Washington D. C which was prosecuted for laundering money for the dictator of Equatorial Guinea. Overall globalisation has had quite a profound effect on the international criminal community. It has created a situation in which it is easier to prosper from illicit activities, and thus the world is worse off for it.

Globalisation is seen by many in today's world as an invasion of different cultures by western (predominantly American) products and materialism. Therefore violence has been sighted by many non-State actors as the only method to preserve certain traditions and values from Americanisation. " Western secular, materialist values are increasingly rejected by those seeking to regain or preserve their own unique cultural identity." (BAYLIS, SMITH, OWENS, 2008) Therefore the world may have become a more dangerous place as the process of globalisation, which is viewed by many as a silent American invasion of western ideals and goods, has and will continue to provoke violent reactions throughout the globe. Since the 1990s there have been many social changes due to globalisation, and the spread of free market capitalism appears to overwhelm the identity or values of certain groups. As the new globally connected system is not to the liking of many

people, cultural friction may translate into conflicts divided along religious or ethnic lines to preserve cultural identity.

Furthermore, economic transformations related to globalisation have left large portions of society disenfranchised while increasing the polarisation of wealth. As Sandbrook and Romano point out, in the era of globalisation, "[Economic] inequality has risen in most countries, and in many cases sharply." (SANDBROOK, ROMANO, 2006: 107) Certain fringe groups have suffered terribly from the economic impact of globalisation. Other classes amongst society may have much to gain but the sense of deprivation of those who don't may become a powerful motivator for violence, and globalisation has left out those who pose the greatest threat. The western post-industrial states of the global North dominate international economic institutions such as the World Bank, set exchange rates, and determine global fiscal policies (BAYLIS, SMITH, OWENS, 2008). These actions can often be unfavourable to underdeveloped countries, and provide motivation for many in the global South to shift loyalties to illegal activities such as terrorism. Globalisation has provided access to a world market for goods and services, but this has often been perceived as a form of western economic imperialism, and thus can also motivate violence. Globalisation is widely believed to have had a generally positive impact on global economic growth, but the effect of globalisation on employment and the distribution of incomes have been intensely debated in recent years. It does create pressures leading to increased inequality in some countries and the need for structural adjustment in all. Therefore, many in the under-developed world have little opportunity to obtain wealth locally, and this has in turn caused mass

emigration to urban centres. However movement is no guarantee of success, and in this case individuals may turn to violence for political or criminal reasons.

In conclusion, globalisation has provided threatening non-State actors with a number of benefits. It has improved the technical capabilities of terrorists and given them global reach, and has created a system in which crime has become far more international. Moreover, globalisation has been seen by many as a western intrusion of other cultures and religions which has motivated violence. Essentially all these factors have certainly made the world a more dangerous place. However, in the era of the Cold War before globalisation took its largest strides, a war between the USA and the USSR had the potential to harm nearly everyone on the planet. This is something terrorists, ethnic militias, and global criminals can never achieve despite now having global reach. The potential threat posed pre-globalisation was greater than that of non-State threats of the present day. On the other hand the Cold War did not harm many at all whereas international terrorism now is causing problems all over the globe. The world may indeed be more dangerous due to the increased powers of non-State threats thanks to globalisation, but the " actual danger of new international terrorist networks to the regimes of stable states in the developed world, but also in Asia, remains negligible." " Horrifying though the carnage of 9/11 was in New York, it left the international power of the US and its internal structures completely unaffected." (HOBSBAWN, 2008) Terrorism has advanced due to globalisation and has the potential to cause global harm but it can never challenge the existing world order. Globalisation has resulted in both

criminals and terrorists developing transnational networks, dispersing their activities, their planning, and their logistics across several continents, and thereby confounding the state-based legal systems that are used to combat non-State transnational aggressors in all their permutations. Threatening non-State groups are major beneficiaries of globalisation. Terrorists and criminals move people, money, and commodities through a world where the increasing flows of people, money, and commodities provide excellent cover for their activities. Both terrorists and transnational crime groups have globalised to reach their markets, to perpetuate their acts, and to evade detection. Therefore, the world has indeed become more dangerous, to a certain extent, as globalisation has created a system in which threatening non-State actors can operate with more organisation and ease; and the consequences are that damage can be caused all over the modern day world.