

Why is it so difficult to
assess and evaluate
the likelihood of
terrorist attacks...



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Why is it so difficult to assess and evaluate the likelihood of terrorist attacks, both within the United States and throughout the world?

Terrorism has become a global issue in the 21st century and every government is making efforts to make their states resilient to the terrorist attacks and terrorist activities in their premises. Terrorism can be defined as “ a method of violence or military strategy that is used sometimes by states but especially by non-state actors”. George Friedman, a military analyst, describes terrorism as “ an attempt to defeat an enemy by striking directly against its general population and thereby creating sense of terror” (Duncan et al 310). The 9 September terrorist attacks in the United States made the government and counter-terrorist organizations realize the urgent and efficient need of counter-terrorist tactics and methodologies for the protection of their public, leadership and infrastructure. Governments of countries all across the world are emerging with modern and effectual strategies. However, certain hindrances are faced during the process of terrorist risk assessment and evaluation. The paper highlights such problems.

Terrorists have used a variety of tactics over a period of time to bring about fear in the minds of general public or any particular group of people. Hence, it would be safe to say that terrorists aim to cause a psychological impact significantly. Common tactics employed by terrorists are bombings, biological and chemical attacks, environmental attacks such as hazardous waste disposal and other tactics such as hijacking, kidnapping, sabotage and arson (Duncan et al 313). International counterterrorism efforts include not only state-to-state co-operation but also multilateral co-ordination such as

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through Interpol. However, it has been observed that Interpol, international police agency, effectiveness has been restricted due to particular reasons. It is poorly funded and the quantity of staff is also not enough limiting its effectiveness. Moreover, Interpol is not allowed to involve in political issues (Duncan et al 315). The separation of Interpol from politics makes counterterrorism a difficult procedure as most of the terrorist attacks are related to political issues and circumstances.

The European Union also developed a similarly acting agency called as Europol. Although Europol works effectively in controlling drugs and human trafficking, the counterterrorism efforts are still lagging behind. Europol requires political, technical and financial enhancement and development to tackle terrorist organizations or activities (Duncan et al 315). One of the major problems faced by the Department of Homeland Security United States is the assessment of the terrorist target locations. Although, certain areas of United States are considered high risk areas, the DHS is unsure of what specific areas the terrorists will attack next (Bullock et al 153).

The efforts against terrorism are majorly hindered because of the financial, technical or political set-backs. United States of America has emerged as one of the most vigilant and active states working against terrorism. It is also one of those states which are at high risk for terrorist attacks. United States of America has several security and counter-terrorist agencies and organizations working in aspects of terrorist risk assessment, evaluation and management. However, factors such as difficulty in predicting the target location of terrorist attacks, low funded agencies or lack of proper staff and technical support acts as short-comings in the effectiveness of the counter-

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terrorist efforts.

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