

# Counterterrorism and american presence overseas essay sample

[Law](#), [Security](#)



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Counterterrorism incorporates the techniques, tactics, practices, and strategies adopted by governments, police departments, militaries, and corporations to attack terrorist acts and threats both real and implied. Most measures taken to counter terrorism tend to pay more attention to the insurgency rather than the acts of terror themselves. The term Foreign Internal Defense or (FID) is used in reference to programs meant to either to contain insurgency, or lessen the conditions which could promote the development of insurgency. Counter-terrorism includes the detection of possible acts of terrorism and the response or reaction to events related to terrorism.

## **US Strategy on Counterterrorism**

Most of the strategies and tactics used by the US in its fight against terrorism at home and abroad are more or less the same. The U. S. has a Counter-

Terrorism Policy that is governed by three general rules. The first rule is that they must not make any deals with terrorists and must also not submit to any form of blackmail. The US Government does not make concessions to groups or individuals holding private or official citizens of the United States hostage. They use any appropriate means to ensure their safe return while denying the terrorists benefits such as policy changes, prisoner releases, ransom, or any other act of concession. The second rule is that they must treat terrorists in the same way they treat other criminals and aggressively pursue them, and that in so doing they must apply the rule of law. The US Government pursues terrorists and terrorist groups who pose a threat to the interests of the American Government or its people regardless of how long it will take.

The third rule is that they must apply maximum pressure on countries and states that support or sponsor terrorists by imposing diplomatic, political and economic sanctions while at the same time urging other nations to do the same. Some of the countries that sponsor terrorism include Iraq, Iran, Cuba, Libya, Sudan, North Korea and Syria. These rules govern the US government's strategy in its fight against terrorism.

The US also boosts the capabilities of other nations working with its government in fighting terrorism. The US Government provides training and other assistance to security services and Law enforcers in foreign governments that are willing to work with it. These courses include coverage in areas like airport security, hostage rescue, crisis management and bomb detection. They also target the financial aspects of terrorism and money laundering. The US Government also works with other countries in identifying

vulnerabilities, enhancing capacities and addressing the issue of terrorist financing.

Most of the counterterrorism policies and strategies are targeted on terrorist groups at international levels. Many of the terrorist threats that occur domestically involve small groups and individuals who may not pose as big a threat as the terrorists abroad. There are several other nations which have adopted more aggressive measures in countering domestic terrorism. The United Kingdom, for instance, has more than thirty years of checkered experience fighting violence in Northern Ireland. These efforts are usually within the limitations and restrictions of a Western democratic society. They often do not raise too much attention from the international community. Israel has more than fifty years' experience fighting terrorism from within, from the other Occupied Territories and also from neighboring states. Their approach has always been far more aggressive and is far less inhibited by democratic institutions. They however remain oblivious to much of the international criticism.

### **Tactics used in fighting terrorism**

One of the tactics used by the US in fighting terrorism is disrupting the flow of finances that serve as a lifeline for the terrorist groups. Without financial support, many of these groups are paralyzed. This tactic may, however, not always work because the US may not always manage to completely disrupt the flow of finances. The terrorist group could also have access to other funds the US may not be aware of. This tactic may also provoke negative reactions from the community who may view this as a violation of rights. It

could also authenticate dissident grievances, or even encourage support for terrorism. This tactic requires specialized skills for it to work. It requires the US to operate as quietly as possible to avoid public outcries from human rights groups and the society at large.

Terrorists are often very difficult to identify. This makes the fight against terrorism much harder and necessitates that the US infiltrates the terrorist organizations with the aim of gathering information. It often involves taking measures such as visual surveillance and wiretaps on suspected terrorist groups and the recruitment of informers. This may sometimes require a lot of manpower as they will need to filter much of the information received to get the relevant information. Many terrorist groups also tend to keep records of their activities. These records shed some light on their movements and possible future plans. The US tries to infiltrate the terrorist groups with the aim of gaining access to this information. This makes intelligence one of the most effective and valuable strategies for counterterrorism.

One problem faced in infiltrating suspected terrorist groups is that it is very risky and time consuming. Informants may also at times be unreliable and could be used by the terrorist groups if discovered. They could also willfully mislead the investigations. This could be due to the fear of punishment from the terrorist group.

One major challenge faced by the US in its counterterrorism efforts is dealing with the ever- evolving tactics used by terrorists. Terrorist groups have come up with new and creative ways of being a menace. Nowadays, they have even learnt techniques of making bombs using locally available household products. This has made it quite difficult for the US to counter terrorist

attacks before they happen as this would require screening random people for products which are not illegal. Such a move could raise much public outcry.

## **Tools used in Fighting Terrorism within the US**

The passing of the Patriot act played a major role in aiding counterterrorism. It equipped the different US Agencies with the necessary tools to fight terrorism. The Patriot Act allows law enforcement agents to use surveillance devices against a wider range of crimes of terror. It also gives federal agents the right to follow terrorists who are trained to avoid detection. This act also allows law enforcement agents to gain access to business and other records of persons suspected to be terrorists if it is a matter of national security. It also makes it easier to obtain a search warrant in cases dealing with terrorism. This act also allows different agencies to share information that could lead to solving cases of terrorism. The Patriot act also gives harsher penalties to terrorists and people proved to aid terrorists, thus discouraging them. Some people however, feel that this act could be abused by law enforcer to harass innocent citizens and curtail their freedoms and liberties. These tools, however, are only applicable at home. Laws governing other nations and states may not permit their application internationally.

Other tools include border protection and security; aviation screening and security; control of aerospace; maritime or port security; cyber security; cargo security; regulation and detection of the illicit use of radiological, biological, nuclear, and chemical materials; biometrics; protection of critical infrastructure; force protection; all forms of hazards preparedness; engaging

communities; and sharing information among organizations dealing with law enforcement at all levels.

### **Tools used in Fighting Terrorism Outside the US**

Abroad, the US uses tools such as deploying military personnel to affected areas, missiles and drones in combat, surveillance, and regulation and detection of the illicit use of radiological, biological, nuclear, and chemical materials. They also try to engage the local communities and try to enlist their support in the fight against terrorism.

### **Differences between Counterterrorism at Home and Abroad**

In domestic insurgency cases, dissidents tend to come from minority groups or host communities, and often live in fairly defined areas. The US made certain attempt to contain or reduce the conflict zones by denying access and erecting barriers. These measures restricted movement but did not fully solve the problem. They only led to discrimination and greater hatred as more ghettos arose, and this only served to increase the number of terrorists domestically.

One difference between the strategies and tactics used in dealing with terrorists locally and abroad is that when dealing with domestic terror, the US is somewhat restricted by its core values and the rule of law. Unlike in certain countries like in the Middle East, extreme measures such as smoking out terrorists using bombs could lead to much public outcry and possibly riots as many people would view it as a violation of human rights. For this reason, the US government prefers to take most of its war on terrorism to the country of origin of the terrorist and not on American soil.

## **US presence abroad in counterterrorism**

The US has deployed military and other personnel in many countries suspected to harbor terrorist activity. This is a necessary move as it not only helps to counter terrorism but also helps in maintaining peace in this region. They work together with the United Nations Peace keeping forces to ensure security and protect the innocent. The US also provides some of the basic amenities to people who have been displaced within these regions. These include food, clean water, medical services and other relief services. US presence abroad could also serve as a deterrent to people in countries that could consider supporting terrorist activities in future. Some of the people in these countries feel that the US presence in their countries is unnecessary and bothersome and this could discourage them from making similar mistakes. Their presence in these countries has a positive effect especially on the local people and should therefore be retained.

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