Example of post 9-11 international relations and the new world ordermatthew burri...

Politics, International Relations

Introduction

The September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks (9/11) on the World Trade Center in New York City and in other parts of the United States (US) has accounted for a heightened sense of anxiety in the international community. With the US, one of the most powerful nations of the world, being the target of the dreadful attacks, the terrorist attacks have served as a strong warning that impresses on the anarchic state of international relations. Considering the event happened at a time when international solidarity is improving through organizations and sub-communities between nations, many changes have taken place in international relations resulting from the sheer propensity of the attacks.

This paper seeks to tackle two important aspects on the impact of the 9/11 attacks –the changes that happened in international relations and the discourse on the New World Order. Both facets are relevant in discussing the 9/11 attacks, as such events have enabled changes in the way international politics operates. Additionally, the focus of international relations changes will be on the differences of a freedom fighter vis-a-vis terrorist, since terrorism was, at the time of the attacks, an emerging trend brought forth by forces of globalization. Defining those two kinds of persons is essential for defining changes in international relations, as those two play quite similar but essentially different roles that could characterize security relations in the international community.

Changes in International Relations – The Difference between a Freedom Fighter and a Terrorist

Explaining the changes in international relations could find a vivid portrayal by the emergence of the then-new concept of terrorism and its difference to the concept of freedom fighting. Both terrorism and freedom fighting are often-confused concepts that has rendered the need for further clarification since stronger manifestations of terrorism has emerged – most notable the 9/11 attacks.

What is Terrorism?

The concept of terrorism has close connotations to the notion of violent usage of force as a means of gaining particular demands from a group of people or a whole nation or government. Nevertheless, it is essential to impress on the fact that terrorism is a concept that has multiple ambiguities in the present literature. It is difficult to establish a concrete definition at this point the people who could execute terrorist attacks, the intended targets as well as the ends of those attacks. (Goodwin 2028). At best, provisions under international law stand as among the most reliable sources defining terrorism. By far, the literature reveals this most definite definition of terrorism at present – acts that contravene international law provisions defining terrorism and condemning such attacks. In brief, defining terrorism would best find solid ground on international law (Ganor 303).

What is Freedom Fighting?

Terrorism has found notable comparisons with the concept of freedom fighting – an act which constitutes national liberation as the ultimate end.

Freedom fighters, so aptly named, have the straightforward objective of pushing for secession, subject to their specific demands. It is in that aspect where terrorism and freedom fighting differs. By objective reason, freedom fighters are mostly guerrilla fighters whose capabilities include their ability to close in on military and other national security forces. There would be a significant turning point if freedom fighters start focusing on attacking civilians – by which point they become terrorists. Based on trends involving terrorist attacks, terrorists have constantly attacked civilians in line with the previous assertion of current international provisions on their role as coercers of particular groups of people for the purposes of gaining specific ends. Terrorists do not have the requirement of including secession or any other nationalist movements as among their key objectives. Freedom fighters, on the other hand, are largely concerned with freedom for the territories they are fighting for (Ganor 298).

Concern on International Law

The 9/11 attacks stand as the most tragic manifestation of terrorism – one that has greatly affected international relations. The deaths of several civilians and the outright destruction of a national icon of the US – the World Trade Center twin towers, have helped shape the characteristics of terrorism as a concept. Thus, international law stands as the most authoritative source on matters pertaining to terrorism. Ambiguities on existing literature remain, mostly because of the factor of violence shared by both terrorists and freedom fighters. Classifying those two kinds of people has become a necessity for the safety of the international community. Such classifications

render the use of different responses from people within the international community, as sanctioned through official announcements crafted from various deliberations. The consensus-based nature of international relations is highly instrumental to the concept of terrorism, considering that the 9/11 attacks serve as one terrorist event the international community is seeking to prevent in the future (Ganor 303). In that case, it is noteworthy to state that the emergence of distinctive concepts – terrorism and freedom fighter, is one that entails different responses from different actors. Those responses, in return, seek to benefit the greater cause of international peace – one that is devoid of potentially rogue actors. Thus, actors within the international community could end up finding themselves in disorganization if they fail to come up with concrete definitions of emerging terms and concepts resulting from the 9/11 attack – one that could become the subject of several future studies (Goodwin 2028).

Relation of the New World Order

Since the US is the target of the 9/11 attacks, it is thus not a farfetched way to think that the event has relevance to the New World Order discourse deliberately discussed by ex-President George H. W. Bush during his administration. The New World Order, generally speaking, refers to the emergence of a single power in the international community. It is in that sense where the US becomes a highly relevant case in point due to its status as a major player in international affairs. Their emergence as the ultimate good has become a recurring emphasis in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, as the government of George W. Bush, President at the time of the attacks,

announced a " war on evil" – directly referring to Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein, President of Iraq (Lazar and Lazar 239).

The prominence of binarism – among the most significant manifestations of the New World Order, has further highlighted the status of the US as a nation that has deep-seated intentions of becoming the leader of all the nations in the world (Lazar and Lazar 239-240). What made binarism strong and popular is the clear and physical exhibitions of terrorist attacks enhanced through the usage of mass media. Mass media has enabled the sporadic spread of ideas against the so-called terrorists being those who harbor evil. The success of that aspect in impressing unto people the deviance of the terrorist has enabled the US to gain the image of being the supreme defender of everything that is good. Therefore, the standing of the US in matters pertaining to the 9/11 attacks has led it to become highly powerful in summoning the support of the international community. Verily, the US government launched an all-out war against evil – the terrorists. In turn, the US has become successful in collaborating with different nations, whose contributions to the armed efforts have become highly instrumental to the crackdown on terrorists (Lazar and Lazar 239-240). What is most daunting about the sheer prevalence of the New World Order theme is the fact that the US government has made this unambiguous call to the international community – " either you are with us [US] or you are with the terrorists" (Lazar and Lazar 239). Ergo, the pure focus on binarism provides for the presence of the New World Order theme.

Conclusion

The 9/11 attacks is, by all means, a highly tragic event for the whole world, which caused several changes to take place. In the case of international relations, new labels, terms and concepts have to emerge as a matter of having to be specific in cracking down on terrorism, terrorists and terrorist attacks. A rethinking of the whole setting of international relations thus has to take place due to the incidence of the 9/11 attacks. As for the standing of the US, the 9/11 attacks have augmented the image of said nation as the most powerful in the world. The New World Order rhetoric present in the subsequent announcements made by the Bush (Junior) administration provides for the strongest presence of hegemonic themes. The presentation of the terrorists – bin Laden and Hussein, as terrorists have employed themes of binarism. Binarism is highly present in the case - one that is strong enough to impress unto the rest of the world that the US is the arbiter of all things good in international relations; the protector of all nations and the main enemy of the evil terrorists attacking the integrity of contemporary international relations. The emphasis of the US that there is no middle ground in expressing support for the conflicting sides makes said nation a perfect representation of a hegemon, in that nations only have two camps to choose – the good (US) side or the bad (terrorists) side. The campaign might have worked well on surface level judgment, but such remains as a controversial matter that renders the necessity of deeper research effort. Further studies on the two-sided rhetoric of the New World Order in relation to cooperation within international conflict are necessary, for both concepts emanate potentially conflicting yet controversial themes.

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